

**a for-charity splatoon zine ★ showcasing the
★ pop culture and daily lives of cephalopods
& other sea creatures**

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This is a non-profit fanzine combining canon- and fan characters with original ideas.









Fuzzbeed's Crab N' Go Drink Ranking!

by Redfox

Crab N' Go has been the go-to snack spot for Splatsville's turfurs for well over a year now! From vitamin packed greens to delicious freshly-fried tempura, it's no wonder young inkfish queue up to grab a bite instead of a match! But even larger than their serving size is their drink selection! Are you craving some-thing sweet? Fizzy? Refreshing? How about all three? With 14 different flavors to choose from, it can be paralyzing to decide which one to try. Lucky for you, I've compiled the definitive drink tier list for Crab N' Go!

I tried all of them—and I mean *all* of them within the same day; gotta put those Shell-Out Machine rewards towards something! Truth be told, this was a hard list to make. Pitting them against each other was almost painful considering I loved everything on the menu! Except for No. 14, which I'll get to in a minute. Still, even I play favorites, and so they've all been properly sorted as to my visions, though with how neck-and-neck they are, don't be surprised if some switch around if you ask me tomorrow! There are 14 drinks total, so let's super jump right into each one!

14. Sub-Lime

Sub-Lime? More like Sub-Par! The purple-yellow gradient of this drink may be attractive, but unfortunately appearances don't help with the flavor. It's way too sour! Maybe if you're the type to torment yourself eating Warsquids you won't be deterred from giving the drink a go, but even a whole heaping of malic acid can't save you from the secondary plum flavor! Who's idea was it to add pickled plums to drinks?? All in all, this gets a negative score from me, which is enough negativity for one article!

13. Actionberry Twist

Actionberry Twist is the latest flavor Crab N' Go has introduced, so it's a rather unfortunate *twist* that it ranks so low. It's blue raspberry lemonade, which sounds sweet and simple, right? But what they don't tell you is that one sip of it will have you squid-surging up every wall you see! The caffeine content of a single serving is 800mg!! That's five times more than even a large double-double from Splat-Tim Hortons! While the

taste itself is fine, I can't recommend this unless you want to feel all your hearts beating out of your chest for the rest of the week!

12. Ink-Well Chiller

Not too fond of sweet drinks? An Ink-Well Chiller definitely hits the spot if you're planning on bearing the heat of Scorch Gorge! Infused with freshly muddled mint leaves and a dash of squid orange, just one gulp will leave your throat with that nice, tingly sensation! The taste is a bit too subtle for me, but it's an artificial-free alternative for all the health gurus out there! Plus, I love crunching on the crushed ice on top! Gives my beak a real workout. Munch, munch...

11. Matcha Reviver

This matcha latte has got that bitter kick to get your butt out of spawn! Using plant-based milk and coconut sweetener, this is definitely green in more ways than one! I like mine poured over ice, but they also serve it piping hot if you'd prefer to burn your hands before a match. Try not to drink too much of it before a turf battle, or else the taste of bitter defeat won't be the only thing stuck on your tongue...

10. Smoothie Especial

Watermelon is great, especial-ly when blended with extra ice for a hot day! The natural sweetness of the watermelon shines in this drink, but it loses points because when not blended for long enough, the chunks of ice stay too big and get

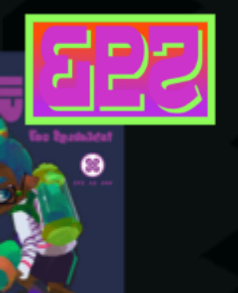
stuck in my straw while I'm sucking it up. I end up either having to shoot them out like I'm an ink vac, or get my mouth pelted if I suck too hard. It's like getting hit with fun sized tenta missiles!

9. Salty Melon Special

This mocktail version of a margarita is equal parts special AND salty! The crushed wintermelon bits and mint leaves get mixed with seltzer water, shaken around in those cool metal cups bartenders use, then poured into a cooled cup with its rim covered in salt! All the fancy preparations kinda get outweighed by the fact it's still served in a plastic cup, but you don't need acquired tastes to find this tasty! Perfect for all the younger squiddies who are curious about cocktails!

8. Super Sub Juicer

Whether you'll love this drink or hate it will all be decided on what your reaction is to the fact this drink is just veggie juice! Cucumbers, lime, spinach, celery—any green thing you can name is probably in this chilled concoction! This drink's a big hit or miss amongst the turfing crowd, but it's a knockout for me! There's just something refreshing about the unique flavor, not to mention this is by far the healthiest drink on the menu! There's no better feeling than chugging this down and asking for seconds of this guilt free drink!



7. Ma's Special Blend

What's in this blue iced tea blend? Who knows! It's a family recipe after all, and if there's one thing we know about those, it's that they're always a secret. The only thing I know as a fact is that it tastes great! As for who this "Ma" person is...that's another mystery for only the food attendant to know, though my current guess is it's for Marigold (or maybe Mama Marigold?). Speaking of, that drink of hers isn't the only thing full of mystery! I swear I saw her last time I visited Inkopolis Square, but when I took the train back, she was in Splatville! Coincidence?

6. Stomping Grape

Made with red and orange squid leg grapes, you can't go wrong with some Stomping Grape soda! Some people say that it's one of the more mediocre drink flavors, but I think that's just because everyone's used to chugging cans of these since they're practically thrown at you during Splatfests. The extra fizz from the carbonation will make you skip and hop right over enemy ink—you'll never be caught tripping over your feet with this!

5. Citrus Hip-Hopper

You can't go wrong with a classic squid orange soda, but it's even better when it's made in house! Garnished with a slice of the orange they squeezed into the drink, you can even ask them to grate the albedo in for that extra fiber! It's the little things that really put this above store bought stuff. Just don't

drink too much—while it's not as intense as Actionberry Twist, it'll still get you hyper enough to turn your super jumps into an inkfish meteor colliding into your teammates!

4. Speedy Gazpacho

Not a fan of the green Super Sub Juicer? Maybe you're just on the wrong team, since this drink's key ingredients are all pink veggies! A variety of peppers and ink tomatoes, blended into a drink so smooth you could slide across it! It might seem odd drinking gazpacho through a straw instead of with a spoon, but try it once in your life and you'll feel yourself able to splat enemies in seconds! Apparently the top splatling players chug at least 3 a day!

3. Sub Berry Blaster Blitz

A blend of blueberries, blackberries, and a whole lot of other berries I can't name, one Sub Berry Blaster Blitz will give you enough energy to hurl a hundred Splat bombs at your enemies! This smoothie became popular at one point among the young inkfish demographic, and even now it's still gaining new fans while keeping its old ones! I personally love it since it reminds me of the smoothies my grandma would make, but without all the seeds! This is the go to drink for nostalgia's sake!

2. Main Mega Pucker Up

Made with both Squid-fin lemons and oranges, Main Mega Pucker Up takes the staple lemonade we all know and love to the next level by using honey instead of sugar! If you

love sweet stuff like me, you can even ask them to drizzle some extra honey on top! This naturally sweet taste is so addicting, you'll wanna savor every last drop of it! If any of the drinks so far haven't caught your eye, try this at least once; it's a great pick up when you aren't sure what else to get!

1. Cherry Apple Fizz

To finish off the list, and my personal favorite, Cherry Apple Fizz is another one of Crab N' Go's house-made sodas! A carbonated drink with cherry and apple flavoring, it's pretty much exactly what you'd think it'd be. You may be wondering how such a simple drink could be crowned the best over things like smoothies and lemonades, and the answer to that is sometimes you just need a reliable drink you can always look forward to. One sip helps me swim through the rest of the day! You can never go wrong with this drink, and if you ask nicely, they'll even throw in a cherry on top! Sweet!

That concludes my drink list! Skeptical on my thoughts? Straight up disagree with me? Send Fuzzbeed an email, or try some Crab N' Go drinks of your own before your next match! And for the younger inkfish new to Splatville, if you're ever out of drink tickets, there are tons of turf battlers and Grizzco workers that'll be happy to give spare tickets out to you, so don't be afraid to ask!











Meeting a rising star: pro X-Rank player crim5on and their life outside the playing field

A few weeks ago, our editor managed to arrange an interview with someone we never thought would accept: Crimson Rivera, better known as "crim5on" or even just "Five" in pro X-rank circles. After some deliberating, it was decided that I would be sent. Now, dear readers, you might not recognize my name for a reason: this is the first interview I will be conducting since I joined the Tide Down team. And as I rang the bell of the building where Ms. Rivera said she would meet me, I won't lie: I was nervous. Rivera is known to be abrasive at best during matches, and downright aggressive and directly confrontational at worst. I was about to find out whether the rumors of that merely being a stage persona were real or not, and for my own sake... I hoped they were!

But I had nothing to fear. Wearing a casual outfit nothing like the sponsor-approved Annaki bling that she'd usually sport in an X-Rank match, Rivera opened the door with a wide grin and took me up to their apartment, welcoming me in "their crib" (their words). They let themselves

fall on one of the sofas in their living room, their legs dangling over the edge, and waved me over. I sat down (rather stiffly, I'll say) and the interview began. Or, well, Rivera sat up and stared at me, after which they exclaimed "Ask away!"

Q: First of all, thank you for welcoming me into your home, Ms. Rivera. May I ask, what made you accept an interview after all this time? You are famously elusive, as far as media presence goes.

A: Please, just call me Crimson, I can't fuckin' stand all that stuffiness. And, really, soon after my pro career began, I got tired of "pro" magazines askin' me the same tired questions. When I heard Tide Down wanted an interview though, it caught my interest. At least you guys will ask new questions that've got nothin' to do with how I play.

Q: Ah- well, I'm happy to hear that. Since our focus is more on public figures' daily lives, rather than their professional ones, it does make sense that we would catch your eye, in that case. I do want to ask a question tangentially related to your career though, if that's alright. You're famous for being... rather abrasive and rude on the turf. I had braced myself for a much rougher attitude before I arrived. What I'm seeing now, though, is very different from what is usually displayed to the public on matches. Why is that?

A: Every time I step on the playing field, I play against a different, insanely challenging opponent. The type of people that could take on an average turf team all by their lonesome. So I need people to take what we're doin' seriously. If I get the impression that that ain't the case and that some bullshit is goin' on, then I gotta get those assholes back on track. Often this runs the risk of bruisin' their egos, and that makes 'em complain about me after the match is won. I guess that's why my career is solo rather than in a team. Don't get me wrong, though, if there was a team willing to join me and take things seriously, I wouldn't be against stayin' with them long-term at all.

Q: That is... very reasonable, actually. You are, after all, X-rank players. That is not a level of play where one can fool around. Let's move on to the next question, though. How do you wind down after a particularly irritating encounter? What do you like to do in your free time?

A: I like playin' videogames; recently I found a recreation of one of those old human videogames and I've been checkin' that out. I also like to read, which tends to surprise people 'cause they assume I'm some kinda brainless brute. I go to the gym often, too, can't skip out on training. Sometimes, if I'm feelin' like I just need to relax, I... I like to disguise myself and go on regular turf matches. I don't go overboard or anythin', don't wanna blow my cover, but it's fun seein' the kids' faces light up when they win. Oh, and of course, I also go on dates with my partner whenever both our schedules allow it.

Q: Right, your partner! You are famously discreet about your personal life and details surrounding it, but she is one of the few things that you are rather open about. Why is that? Is it because she is also a celebrity?

(I would like to include that hearing this question, Ms. Rivera positively lit up. They have become rather known for talking about their partner any chance they get, and this one simple reaction is quite a strong confirmation of those rumors. By the end of their answer, a dreamy smile had overtaken their features).

A: Yeah! Sneža [referring to Sneža Frostleaf, competitive figure skater] might be rather shy off the ice, but she knows she has a public presence as well as I do. There honestly wasn't much of a choice other than to be open about us. She's fantastic, though. She's my biggest support and she's patched up more than



her fair share of bruises and scrapes from accidents I get on the playin' field. I do the same for her, too. We take care of each other, no questions asked.

Q: That is very sweet, and it's good to hear that you both have each others' backs. However, how do you both fit romance into a life of professional athleticism, especially with the time you spend in the public eye? Do fans ever bother you outside of your respective fields?

A: We manage just fine, thankfully. We both make enough space in our schedules to have the free time that we need. It helps that just spendin' time in the same room with the other there is enough for us to feel content. About the fans, we're actually pretty easy to miss when out in public if we're not in our usual getups. You'd have to be a super-fan to recognize us, and the few that do are usually respectful enough to be aware of our boundaries. And if they aren't... well, let's just say my "abrasive" personality, as you put it, ain't just for show. I'm not beyond kickin' someone's ass if they're bein' disrespectful and not treatin' us like people.

And with that perfect warning note, it was time to wrap up the interview. Ms Rivera and I shook hands, and I had to bite back a yelp at her grip strength, which... judging by her weapon of choice, I guess I should have expected. They led me downstairs, insisting on seeing me off at the door, remarking "I may be an asshole,

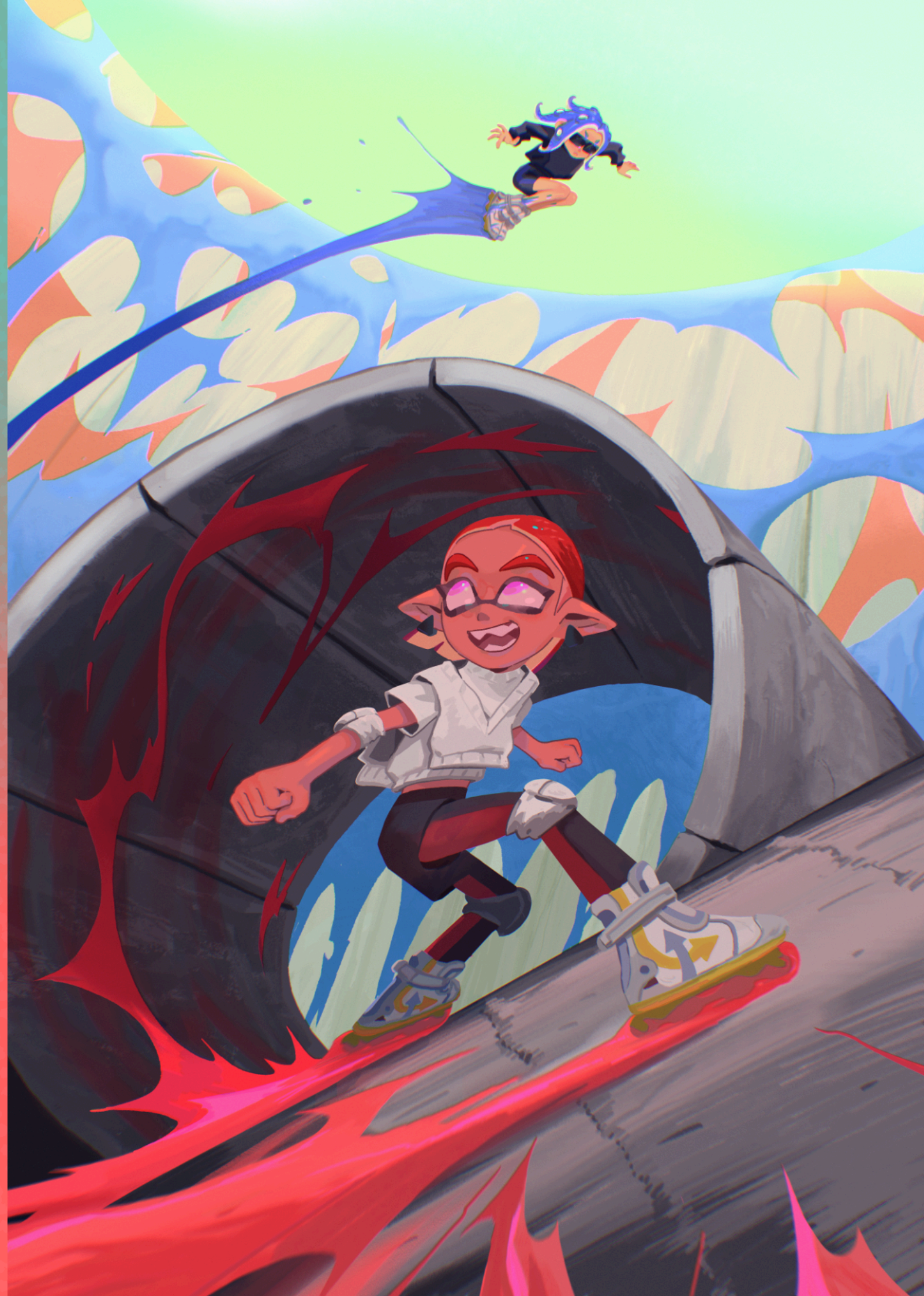
but my mama raised me right. You don't just kick guests out at the apartment door!" As they saw me off with a wave, I walked off with a sense of satisfaction: what a successful interview!

Crimson Rivera has made quite the name for themselves in pro X-Rank circles in the last few months. They entered the scene as a wildcard with an Annaki sponsorship and quickly climbed through the ranks to become the player we know today. Many claim that they are violent, abrasive, aggressive, and even a danger on the playing field.

This interview has, in my humble opinion, proven otherwise. While rough around the edges, Crimson is an exceedingly passionate person, taking no nonsense from people who are supposed to be on the same level as them. They are still loud and strong-willed off the turf, but also polite and shockingly honest. Perhaps this might help bring a different perspective on this controversial figure (and, really, nobody who has seen them ramble about their significant other could remain skeptical of their genuine nature for long).

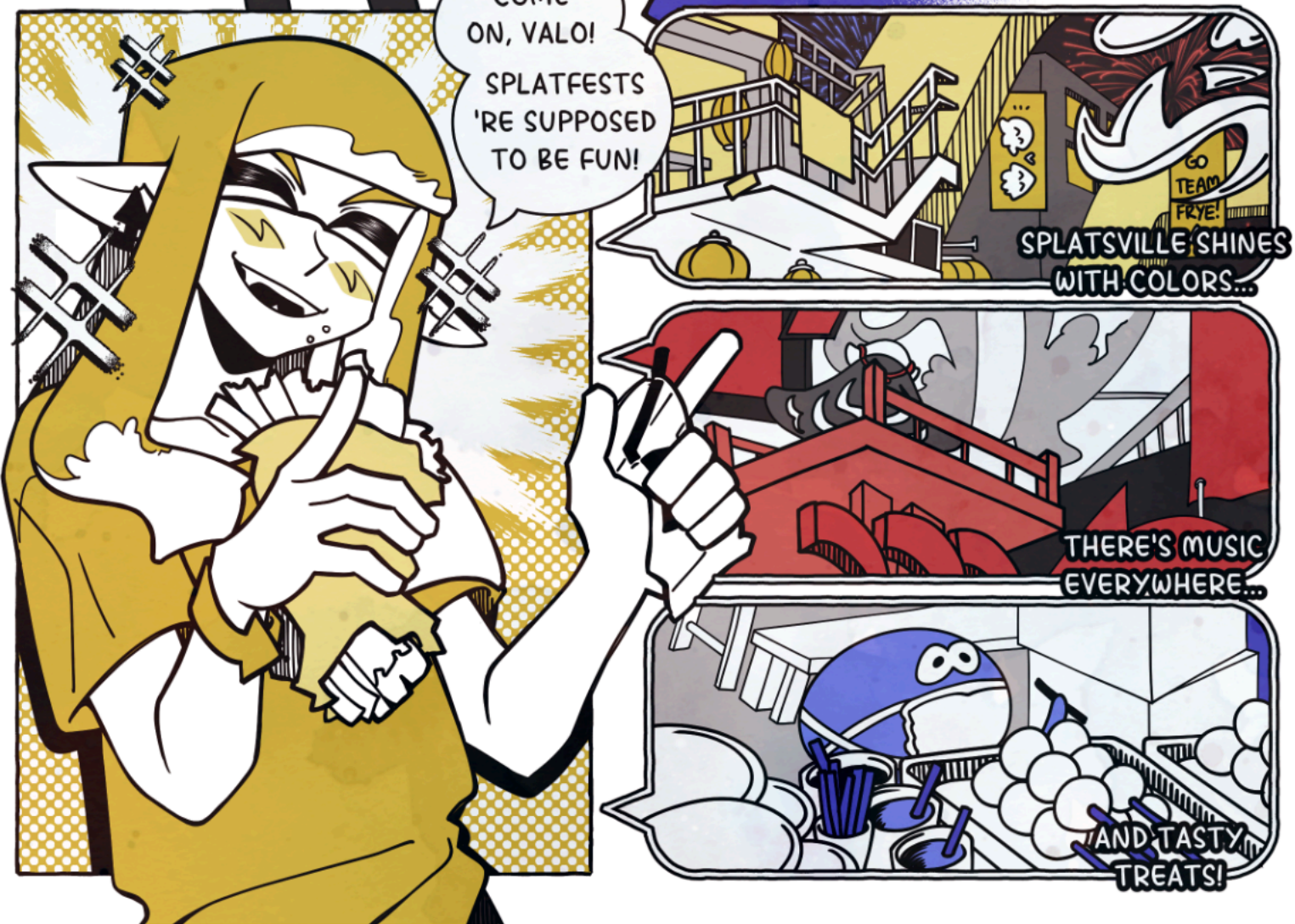
Maguro Hamasaki is a new player in the field of journalism, joining the Tide Down team a mere six months ago. A Splatsville native, they are familiar with the quickly changing tides of public opinion and popularity. For inquiries, they can be contacted at:

td.maguro.hamasaki@cmail.com













THERE'S NO HOPE. IT'S OVER FOR US.

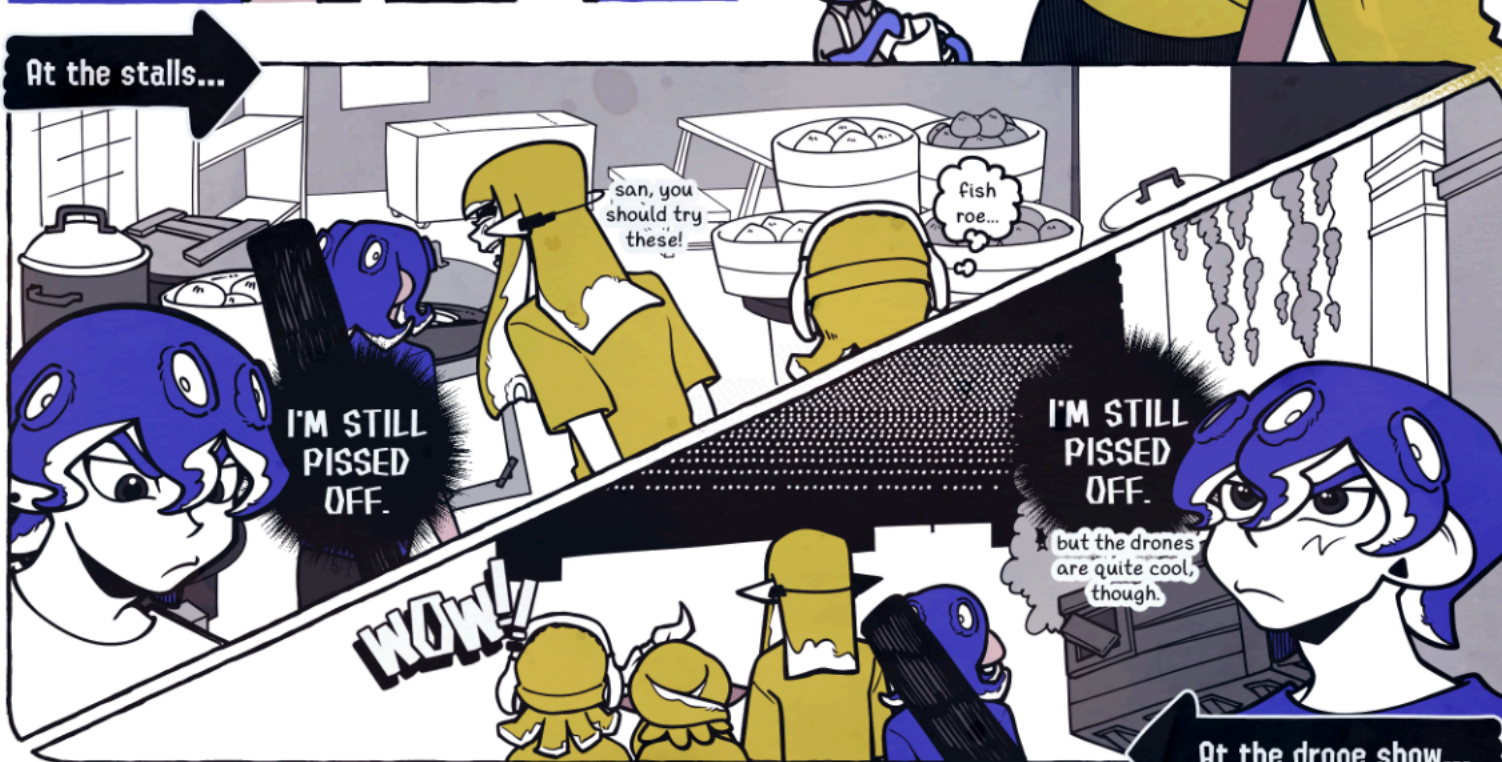
SO ANNOYING!



GUYS! YA CAN'T BE SAD WHEN THERE'S DRINKS AROUND!

LET'S GO FOR SOME FOOD AT THE STALLS! THEY HAVE FRIED SHRIMP AND FISH ROE!

YES YES!



At the stalls...

san, you should try these!

fish roe...

I'M STILL PISSED OFF.

WOW!

I'M STILL PISSED OFF.

but the drones are quite cool, though.

At the drone show...



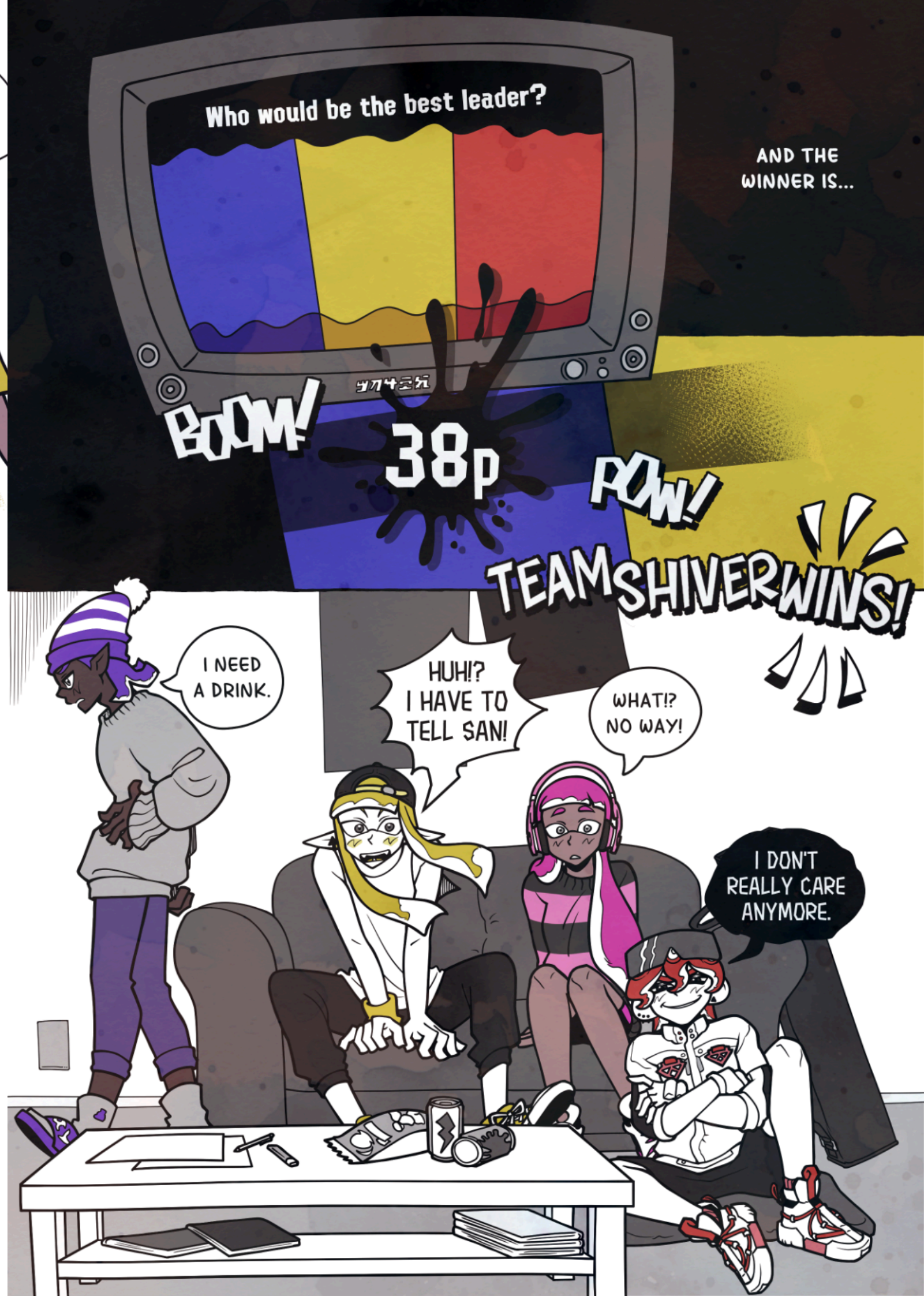
HEH VALO, DON'T GIVE UP!

YOU'LL TRY AGAIN TOMORROW, YEAH?

YEAH, I GUESS.

MAYBE AT TRICOLOR IT'LL GO BETTER.

AND THE NEXT DAY WAS EVEN WORSE.



Who would be the best leader?

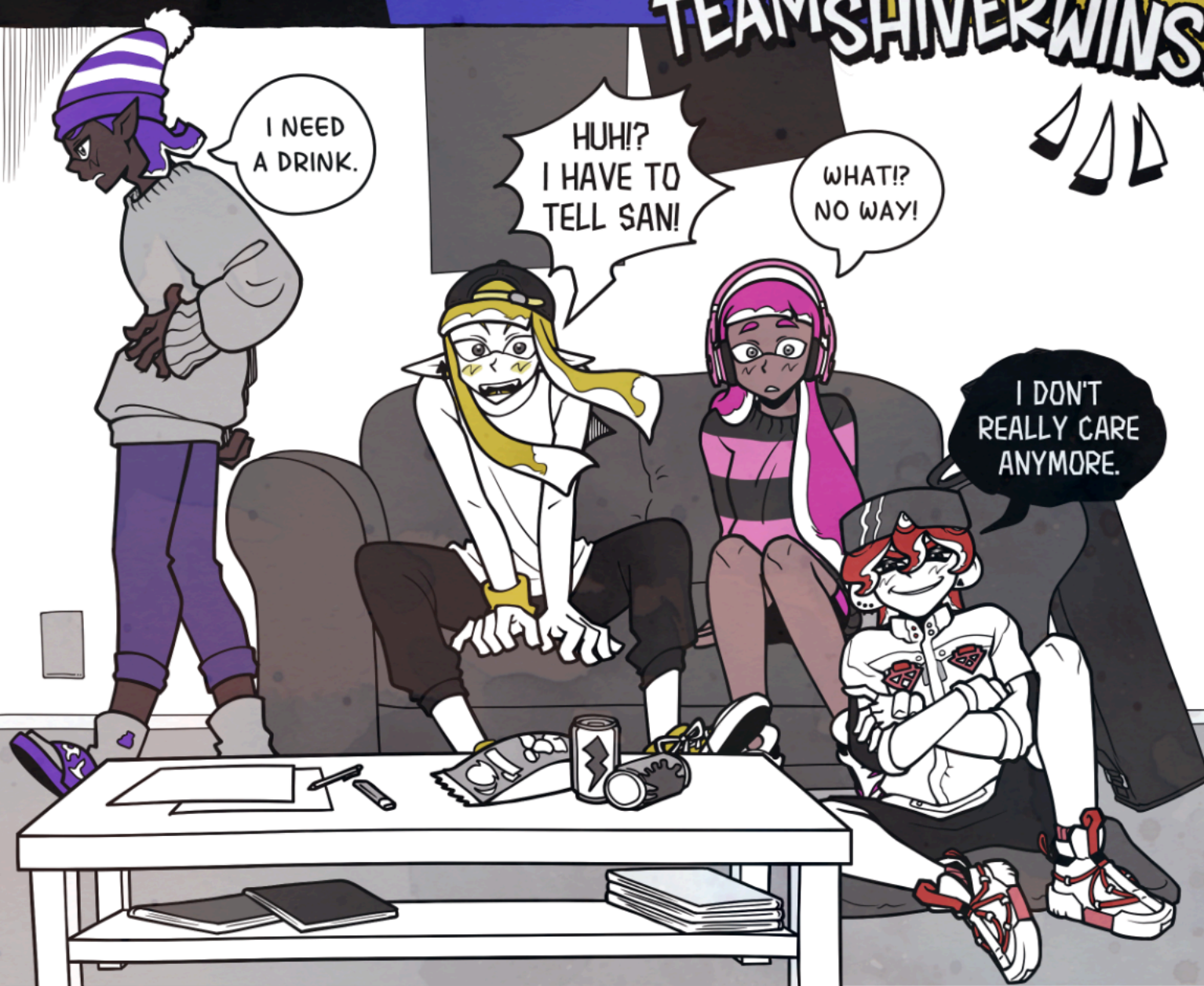
AND THE WINNER IS...

BOOM!

38p

POW!

TEAM SHIVER WINS!



I NEED A DRINK.

HUH!? I HAVE TO TELL SAN!

WHAT!? NO WAY!

I DON'T REALLY CARE ANYMORE.







Think Twice

Golden afternoon light spills in through the windows of the living room. Fiery patches of square-shaped sunlight have chased each other across the carpet all day; now that the sun touches the horizon, they're climbing up the walls, glancing off the bookshelves stacked full of porcelain antiques and silver knick-knacks. Hazy late-summer heat permeates the very air in the room, undeterred by the droning box fan placed half a meter from the two Inklings crammed together on the loveseat.

It's too small for the both of them, so they've given up on keeping their distance. The outsides of their thighs touch and their shoulders bump together. It stopped being awkward hours ago, their attention instead put toward the adventure game displayed on the crackly CRT screen. The retro cube-shaped console whirs with the disk spinning inside it, the fan hums, and the control stick in Spencer's hands clacks in an unpredictable cadence. Shiloh taps his fingers on his knee to the beat of the game's jaunty battle theme.

The current in-game setting: an arena on an island suspended in the sky, known for attracting the eyes and bets of the bored upper class. Of course, something sinister lies beneath the surface. In unraveling the mystery, the hero and his ragtag team of friends navigate the red carpets, gilded banisters, and blistering spotlights of the fighting ring, and the dingy

locker rooms and gruff competitors backstage. The emphasis on combat during this segment of the game allows Spencer to put her brain to optimizing her moves, and is just fun for Shiloh to watch. Mistimed button presses and miscellaneous strings of bad luck have sent Spencer to her doom, and a reset, more than once already, to Shiloh's schadenfreude.

Rising through the ranks to the champion level will award them one of seven magical artifacts they must collect to save the world. Spencer bears two already, hard-won evidence that, by now, she knows what she's doing.

Though her current opponents are a touch more threatening than the rest—giant mounds of iron with booted feet and craggy faces, the tops of their heads covered in spikes. Spencer speeds through their heckling dialogue, their claims to be indestructible, with her brow furrowed.

"They don't look that tough," Shiloh dismisses them with a shrug. "All the variants of these guys up 'till now have been weaksauce."

"There's a reason it's insisting they're unbeatable," she says as she flicks through the menu first thing. As she always does when faced with a new enemy, she selects the option to spend a turn learning its stats. She reads aloud, "Six HP, four attack, defense...oh."

Unknown, the game asserts. *Impenetrable. No attack will work. Running away might not be a bad idea at this point.*

"What, they set you up with this just to tell you to forfeit?" Shiloh scoffs. "There's gotta be a way around it."

"That *was* the hint." Spencer spins through the menu a second time, her last turn before the foes attack, as if searching for an alternative despite herself. Resignation weighs heavy in her voice. "If it wants me to run, I'm not wasting my time doing anything else."

But it's not so easy. Every action in this game requires some kind of controller input, even fleeing a battle. Spencer has only a few precious seconds to mash a button and fill a meter as much as she can. As she does, an arrow bounces from side to side of the meter, a taunting pendulum.

Time runs out. The arrow lands on a tiny sliver of empty meter. The heroes collapse where they stand, pick themselves up, and slouch back into their positions on the field. The in-game audience groans, their reaction drowned out by Shiloh's cackling laughter, filling up the room and crowding out the sweltering summer air.

"How'd you mess that up?!"

"I didn't!" Spencer snaps, elbowing him in the side. "It just—didn't start in the right place—"

The enemies advance on her hapless character. They're slow, but Spencer notoriously can't nail the timing of the button press to nullify the damage. She eats the full force of the attack: four points, and then another four

when the second monster lunges. Her character's idle animation switches from thoughtful to visibly exhausted, slumped over and panting. A repetitive warning-bell tone plays, layered over and in time to the cheerful music.

"Idiot wasting my time," she growls at the character she's controlling, like it's his fault for taking a beating. Shiloh's laughter has subsided, though her grumping makes him snort.

"You won't survive another hit like that," he observes. "Especially if you don't guard."

"Captain Obvious, I don't *have* to," Spencer retorts on reflex, so quick about it she nearly cuts him off. She flicks through the menu but pauses as she highlights the "run" option, collecting herself. "It just has to not screw me over. Don't say 'skill issue.'"

"Wasn't gonna," Shiloh lies into the rim of his water glass as he brings it to his lips.

Spencer issues her command with her typical impatience, and the characters get into position to flee a second time. She's *serious*, now; she hunches over the controller and hammers the button until her fingers are a blur. Both Inklings' eyes track the arrow's hypnotic dance over the meter as it fills up green. Two-thirds, three-quarters, four-fifths—

The arrow freezes once again on the far side of the meter, over a vacant dull gray. Again the characters trip over themselves and topple to the ground.

"WHAT?" Spencer bellows. Shiloh doubles over, a hand over his mouth as he narrowly avoids spitting his water all over the screen. He swallows and then howls with laughter, his head tilted back.





It's not an environment conducive to Spencer's focus. She swears as the enemies approach, and again, louder, when she flubs the timing to block. Her character's HP drops to 0; he wobbles where he stands, groaning, and faints. The screen fades to black.

A moment later it fades back in—she was *supposed* to lose the battle, after all, the one time it wouldn't have resulted in a game over—but she isn't done fuming and Shiloh isn't done laughing. He recovers himself just barely enough to wheeze, "Twice?!" before he's gone again. No amount of poking or prodding will shut him up, and it's too hot to get any closer to him than she already is, so Spencer settles for taking her glasses off and burying her face in her hands.

Eventually, Shiloh's laughter dies down, though he still has a shaky little smile on his face as he reclines back into the couch. The noise of the game's crowd blends into the buzz of the box fan until the two are intertwined, inextricable. Breathing the warm, heavy air is suddenly a chore. Spencer reluctantly deigns to

acknowledge the surrounding world when she puts her glasses back on, allowing the screen to come back into focus. The dialogue resulting from her loss, the announcer's stupefaction at her character's defeat, earns a squint and a scowl.

"Funniest way possible," Shiloh smirks.

"Shut up." She has half a mind to dig her fingers into his side and make him yelp, but can't bring herself to move. The sunset haze wraps around them both like a blanket. With nowhere else to go on the tiny couch they share, she ends up leaning into him. The moment hangs, languid, thick in the temples and on the tongue.

Spencer blinks, shakes her head a little, and presses the button. The screen fades out, returning the player characters to the locker room where they started. Shiloh's absent smile lingers on his face. Tucked into him as she is, the rising and falling of his chest as he breathes is another rhythm, a reliable constant. The day's slipped away, comfortable and unbothered. The next adventure beckons.



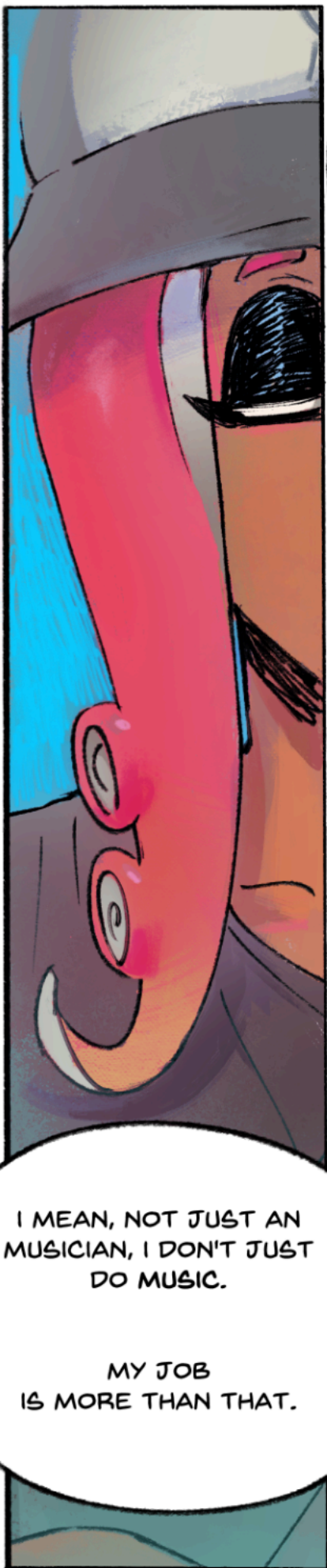




Tape:
#20 Friend




I'M NOT A MUSICIAN.



IT'S ABOUT
TRANSCENDING,
LEAVING A PERMANENT
MESSAGE.

I MEAN, NOT JUST AN
MUSICIAN, I DON'T JUST
DO MUSIC.

MY JOB
IS MORE THAN THAT.



A MESSAGE NOT ONLY
FOR THE PRESENT.

BUT ALSO FOR THE FUTURE
GENERATIONS.



I WANT TO...



...BE REMEMBERED...

THERE ARE
SOME
PEOPLE...

...WHO DON'T
EVEN WANT
TO FOLLOW
THAT PATH.

WHY?

?



HEHE~

HELLOOO~
DID YOU MISS
ME, WARABI?

OH...

HELLO
MIZUTA.

UHM I MEAN...

I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU HERE,
IT'S BEEN LONG SINCE WE
TOOK APART AND, AND...
HEY! DID ENDED THAT PERSONAL
PROJECT YOU WERE DOING??

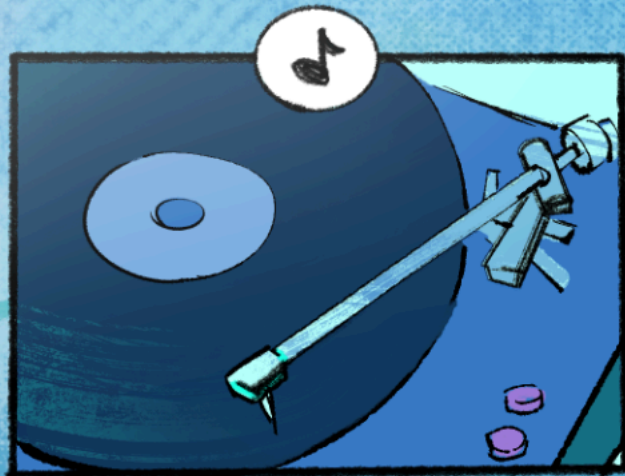
OH, NAH... THINGS
REALLY CHANGED...

BUT, I ALSO MISSED
YOU, WE COULD HANG OUT,
I GOT A NEW SQUID
SQUAD VINYLs.

YES!!!

EHEM! YEAH,
THAT SOUNDS
AWESOME!
I HAVE SOME
FREE TIME
RIGHT NOW...!





I'M NOT A MUSICIAN.

I MEAN, NOT IN THE WAY
YOU WANNA BE, AND IT'S ALRIGHT.

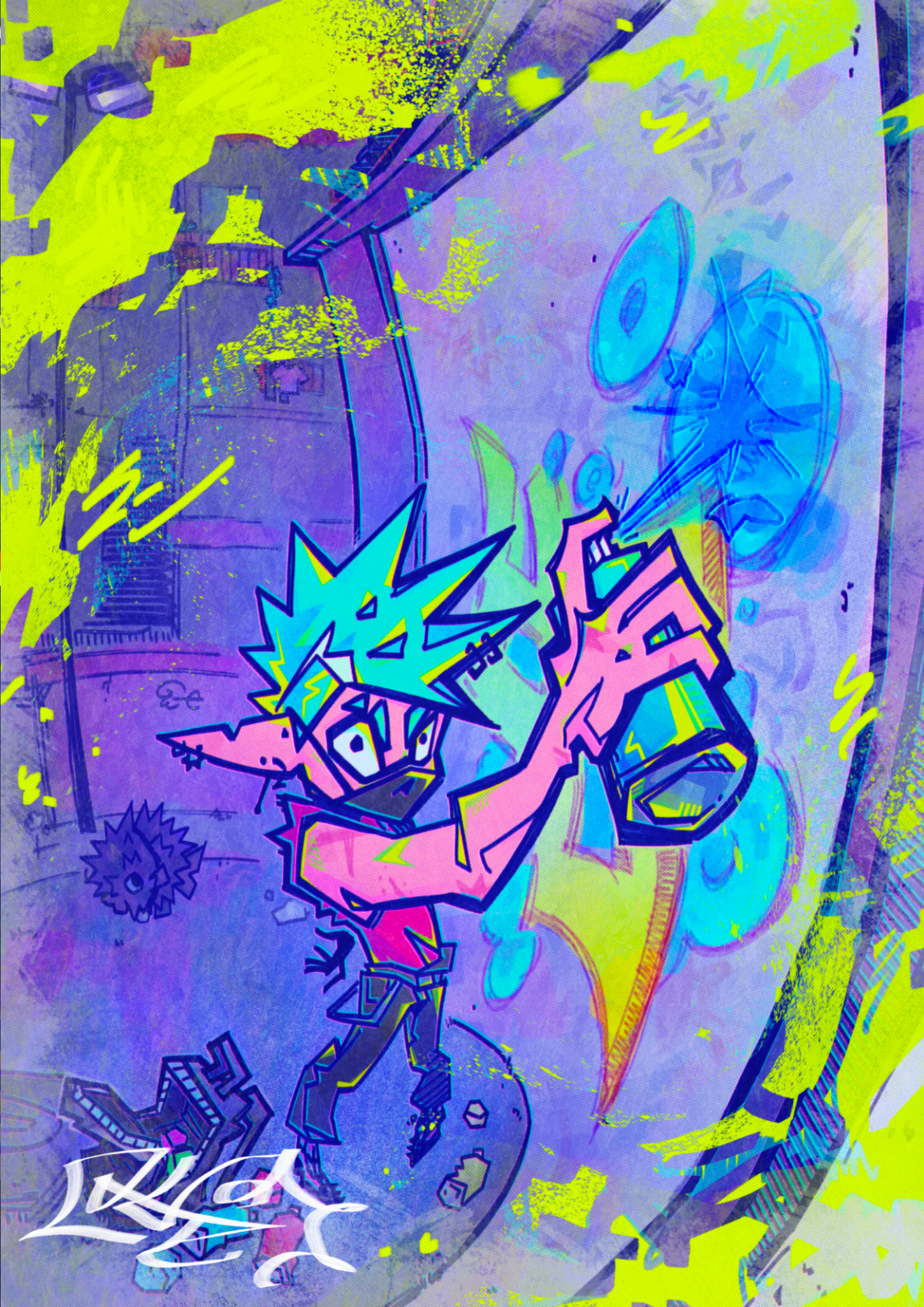


WITH MY WORK
YOU'LL TRANSCEND, I'LL LEAVE
A MARK ON EVERYBODY ABOUT YOU.
THEY'LL KNOW HOW MUCH I LOVED YOU.

WITH MY MUSIC I'LL REMEMBER YOU.







dartboard dock

"It starts with an imitator phase." He rubbed at his nose – well, the area where a nose would be on a spider crab – and sniffled. Desert nights always dogged him, no matter how many times he went for a tag. "No special term for it. It's just the imitator phase, like every other kind of art history."

Oddball, perched on the rusty hand-rail behind him, tightened their grip. "The remastering of human-era graffiti."

"Yep." His brow furrowed. Spider crabs didn't have traditional eyebrows, but a movable cleaner-lens that acted as a substitute. He currently resembled a frog mid-blink. "That phase either lasted since the dawn of modern graffiti or approximately 12 months. Depends who you ask, but –"

"There was an example on the textile factory we passed."

"That – what? No?" He did a double take. "No. That was a city commissioned work and the artist signed it with fingerpaint. That's not authentic human phase." He blinked. "Authentic imitator phase. Whatever." The stranger rolled his shoulders with the clicking of a bike chain turning on its gears. "Let's just call it phase 1: a buncha straight-up copies, because self-expression's overrated and it's easier to just copy everyone else

instead of making something worth the time of your audience. Got it?"

Oddball frowned. Oddball always looked mildly aggravated, but when they truly frowned, their one working eyebrow fuzzed up like a caterpillar. "Everyone borrows what they like when they begin." Every sentence out of Oddball's mouth sounded toneless and blunt, but the stranger recognized snippy when he saw it. "You call it 'a necessary cannibalism.'"

"Making pale imitators for an entire living just makes you a pale imitator, kid. Anyways." He jiggled the spray-can. Snaky blue covered the yellow outline of his first run. "Most say the imitator phase started and died with a social media trend. Some people say it never truly died. Some people are stupid."

"Perhaps." Oddball never seemed to blink. Cephalon-kid eyes were big and beady by trade, a sign the owner had too much compressed energy for their own good. They were big and beady when they were sad, big and beady when they were happy, and probably big and beady when they died. Maybe. He wasn't sure. The stranger was raised in a predominantly non-cephalon community, so he'd never seen a dead cephalon-kid before. Dead crab kids, sure. Not dead cephalons. Maybe their eyes shrank when they bit it?

Hoping that the gravitas of his blatantly-lost-in-thought silence enforced his earlier point, he quickly turned around and refocused on his linework with a huff. "Artists realized this venture was going nowhere and went back to the drawing board. People immediately got weird with it. The next era started before we even knew it had begun."

"The face era," Oddball said. The stranger nodded in response. "Which included that artist with the golden eyes."

The stranger whirled around. "I told you about eyes guy?"

"You once pointed at a repurposed billboard and said 'eyes guy, with my little eye, eyes guy.'"

"Oh." A gust of wind whistled down the decrepit docking bay. The stranger huffed. "Honestly, he's only one guy in a long line of artists, but he was an early pioneer. Eyes guy painted strangers he met on the street, then make a bunch of different versions of their faces in different styles until he'd covered a block. Cubist, baroque revival, Dungressan – he could paint 'em all."

"Except with his eyes."

"Correct. They always had his own eyes, and his eyes always remained the same – no style changes whatsoever." Another gust of wind brought a sudden chill that made his arm tighten up. A neat, thin line suddenly waned fat. "Ugh. His goal was to force people to ask questions. They did, sure, but... mostly the same ones."

Oddball pursed their lips. "'Why,' for example."

"Yeah, exactly. 'Why.' 'What's with the eyes.' 'Who keeps doing this.' You get it." He shrugged. The spray cans in his beat-up satchel clinked around like tone-flat windchimes. "Also, his yellow was a custom-made mix of paint. Not gold. Eyes guy yellow."

Oddball looked down the dock towards the other end of the metal boat hanger – a sad attempt at a fingerhold in the shipping industry, awkwardly tucked into the shadow of a failed interstate, very awkwardly converted into a dusty corner of the warehouse district. The inlet of the slimy river, which awkwardly trundled through the city like a stumbling zombie, had long dried up here. The railing they sat on overlooked a drop into a den of sand and weeds and broken glass.

Kids played here often. Oddball uncaringly leaned backwards and pointed to a small warmup burner the stranger had whipped up on the far end of the hanger. "It is the same yellow used down there."

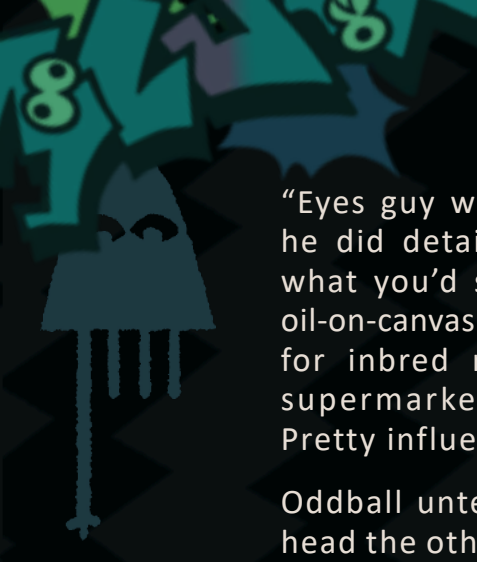
"No, that – no. That's small fry yellow. You should know this." He frowned at his layer 2 again. "I thought you were headed to a prestigious art school."

"Perhaps."

"Inkblot Academy?"

Behind him, Oddball tensed up. "Can't afford Inkblot."

"Oh. Got it." He scratched his chin. It sounded like a spoon scratching a dirty ceramic bowl.



"Eyes guy was a pioneer because he did detail work that matched what you'd see in museums, real oil-on-canvas stuff normally reserved for inbred royalty, using mostly supermarket-brand paint cans. Pretty influential dude."

Oddball untensed and tilted their head the other way. Their hunched back and dead gaze gave them the appearance of a stone gargoyle. "He did not influence your style."

"No, but he did make me ask questions." He narrowed his eyes at the peak of a line, then glanced down at the concrete. By his feet sat the original sketch for his work. "That was good enough for me."

He'd pinned his notepad down with a few paperweights – a discarded brake pad; a huge iron bolt; a concrete perfect cube; a shiny limestone chunk. Oddball carried these and more in a beat-up, homemade-patch-coated mess-enger bag. Their sketchpad, normally tucked away, now hung on a lanyard fastened from a phone-charging cord. Oddball took their recycled DIY projects seriously.

It reminded the stranger of someone he knew growing up. It made it hard to look at Oddball sometimes.

He sighed. "At the end of the day, though, eyes guy was both a mold-breaker and a walking stereotype. He made his impact, sure, but only so people remembered his name."

"And his name is..."

"No clue."

Oddball hummed. "I see." Then: "Bottom left corner."

"What? Oh. Good eye." One spritz of the can, and layer 2 was done. He stuffed it back into his satchel and pulled out another – small fry yellow. Wrong color. He started rifling through the bag. "Corporate bigwigs didn't really get it until far after the movement ended. Nobody cared if you painted a model's face, they cared if you painted someone who could be their grandma." He scowled. Where was the right color? "Then came the blur era."

"The war era."

"Yep. Took influence from a human movement called futurism. It focused on how machines affected our lives, no doubt influenced by..." Where was it? This was driving him nuts. "...I dunno – economic recession, probably? Lots of dark colors, lots of hard jagged points and metal edges. 'Edge' is the word of the day here. It tried so hard to be different that it became predictable, which got boring, and then things just... spiraled into anarchy."

"The wars."

"Yep. Everything you're supposed to respect with graffiti, the blur era didn't. It was brutal. They'd wait for people to finish month-long murals and would coat them with crappy burners." He shook his head, a gentle clicking of chitin rotating on an axis. "The before and after pictures are nightmarish."

Oddball bit the inside of their lip.

The stranger was too busy fighting with his satchel to notice. "Ugh, c'mon – look, it killed off any interest for newcomers. Half the gig became

expert parkouring just so they could finish their work without flak... grah! Shit." He gave up with a huff. Stupid cold desert nights. Stupid missing paint can. "What's left is just what couldn't be defiled."

Oddball hummed. "That monument we passed, of the melting statues. The one across the bridge's underside."

"The Marble Drip." He nodded. "Yeah, that's blur era. I actually met the guy who made that."

"...you did."

"Yeah. He's a prick."

"...I see."

"Yeah." He started looking down the docks. "I got started around then, during the tail-end of that era. Marker tags in bathroom stalls and subway trains. Y'know, kiddie shit, like what you do –"

"I do not do that."

"– just up until I got my break. It was the exact moment the era died. In a fit of stupid, cops started hiring artists to label their cars. The community found a common enemy." He smiled at Oddball, a crooked, mean-looking thing with crooked, mean-looking teeth. "We'd paint the word 'police' on a car, get paid, and return later to paint whatever we actually wanted. I mostly painted naked dudes, which wasn't very funny, in retrospect." (It was a little funny.) "The rehash era has been more clean-up and guerilla-fights than anything else."

"The rehash era is the current phase."

He nodded. "Just a rest period before the next big thing, but yeah. We brought the old rules back, and hopefully now we can move past years of infighting. If you use that social-media trend as the start, then it's been like..." He cocked his head back. "I dunno. 9 years ago? Yeah – 9 years since the modern era's started."

Oddball said nothing, just stared at the stranger's original sketch.

It stretched across the entirety of the page, adorned with labels and notes of the paint he planned to use. He borrowed arabesque patterns from humans called the Moors, repurposed into a glistening, blinding pattern that made its center – to be painted in only black and white – pop out like a bubble, static on a background of beautiful honeycomb muqarnas, a delicate pattern that funneled all of the viewer's attention towards its cartoon-doodle centerpiece: a pixelated 'computer-art' blob-type take on the name of a human era brand. A stick figure, sitting on the throne of an emperor.

Oddball thought it was beautiful.

The stranger didn't care much for it. He bent down, scooped up his sketchpad with a free claw – ditching Oddball's borrowed paperweights – and leaned against the railing next to Oddball.

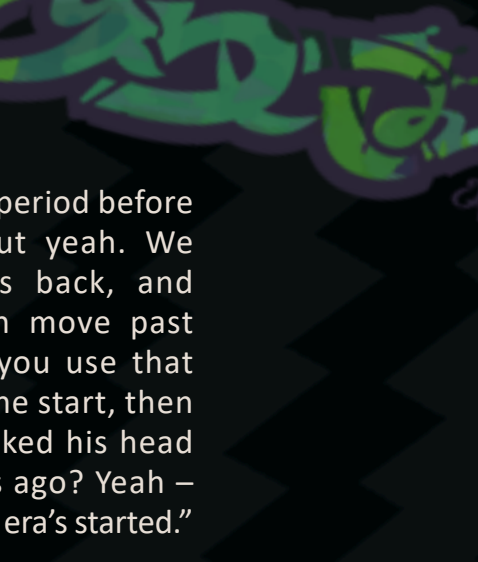
They stared at the wall in silence.


Then they stared at the sketch.

'Cuisinart,' draft one, stared back.

"...we haven't come up with much," muttered the stranger.

Oddball looked up.





He dropped the sketchpad. It landed with a thwap at his sneakers. “An expression of ego heralded by Inklings only goes as far as the Inkling ego does. It’s easier now than ever to get caught in the ever-growing drama cycle of z-list celebrity artists – if ‘artists’ is even the term you prefer.” He glanced at the perched kid. “Some prefer ‘criminals’ or ‘activists.’ You do you.”

“I plan to.”

“Heh.” The stranger sighed. “Still, for all the labels we use, trying to sort modern graffiti into time periods hasn’t made much sense of our own identities as artists. Maybe it’s the feeling we can’t escape the humans. So much of graffiti –”

“The living shadow.”

The stranger squinted at them. “The what?”

“The shadow that all Inkling culture thrives in. The human era. The shadow that never truly dies.” Oddball stared at the blank page of their own sketchpad. They shrank their shoulders. “All advances are built because or in spite of a shadow of death we can never truly escape. It lives through every advancement in our technology. We cannot remove its presence, and we cannot escape its gaze.” They closed their eyes, the weight of their words echoing across the docks. “The living shadow of human death.”

The wind howled by, louder than ever before.

...

After a moment, the stranger shrugged. “Yeah. Y’know, that.”

“Mm-hm.”

He leaned back and stargazed. “Graffiti for humans was, as you already know, stigmatized, only elevated through sterilization or elitism or poverty fetishization. The modern lack of stigma makes it more ‘digestible’ for consumers. Like a punk band performing at a political convention.” The stranger scratched at his hole-covered sleeveless shirt, smiling bitterly. “Graffiti actually improves property value now.”

Oddball scowled. “No, it does not.”

“It genuinely can. No joke. All because it lacks the intensity of the stigma that made it popular in the first place.” He glowered at his unfinished work. “We as artists now fight all commercialization through pseudo-self-sabotage. We threaten the safety of our art form by indulging in the most genuine way: illegally and insulting everything we can’t stand through existing. The way it truly lives.”

“That is what I enjoy the most.” Oddball glanced at their own sketchpad. “The sharpness of its tongue.”

“...the sharpness is only part of the appeal.”

They glanced up.


He stared at smog-clouds as he spoke. “Self-expression has been corrupted into a meaningless term for hyping up clothing brands.

Graffiti is a puppet now, a sterile flash of bright colors, bumper sticker fodder. We’re stuck relying on pure defiance and anger. But honestly?” He grinned. “That’s the fun part.”

The stranger stretched his back as he continued. “Corporations all want in on seeming ‘counter-culture’ without actually being it, so they make for easy targets. No single brand can claim a tag or a style for too long because that’s quick way to piss off a lot of artists. And we can swarm like bees when we need to.” He turned his grin to Oddball. “We thrive in the hatred of our misuse. That’s what graffiti is: an expression of namesake and emotion against a backdrop of cold, grey concrete. A shout in the void that nobody can own.”

Oddball hummed. “I see you view it in a rather dramatic way.”

“Hah! Yeah, a little.” He pushed himself off the railing. “For the most part, though? I just do it ‘cause we live in a dump. Gotta pretty it up somehow, right?” He started walking towards his starter tag – he’d spotted the missing spray-can underneath it – but suddenly stopped.



“Oh, actually...” He gestured at the unfinished piece. “Do you have any suggestions? I know you really wanted me to paint this, so...” The stranger waited for their thoughts.

Oddball stared at the wall. After a moment, they nodded. “Use more aquamarine.”

“Really? Where?”

“I do not know.”

He blinked. “...and that’s it.”

“Yes.”


The stranger rolled his eyes, sighed, and trudged off to grab the spray-can, leaving his sketch on the ground in front of the railing. “Alright, smartass, back in a sec.”

“Okay.”

For a moment, Oddball watched him go.

Then, they quietly flipped their own sketchbook to an empty page and yanked a pen from their bag. It took mere seconds to copy the stranger’s sketch.

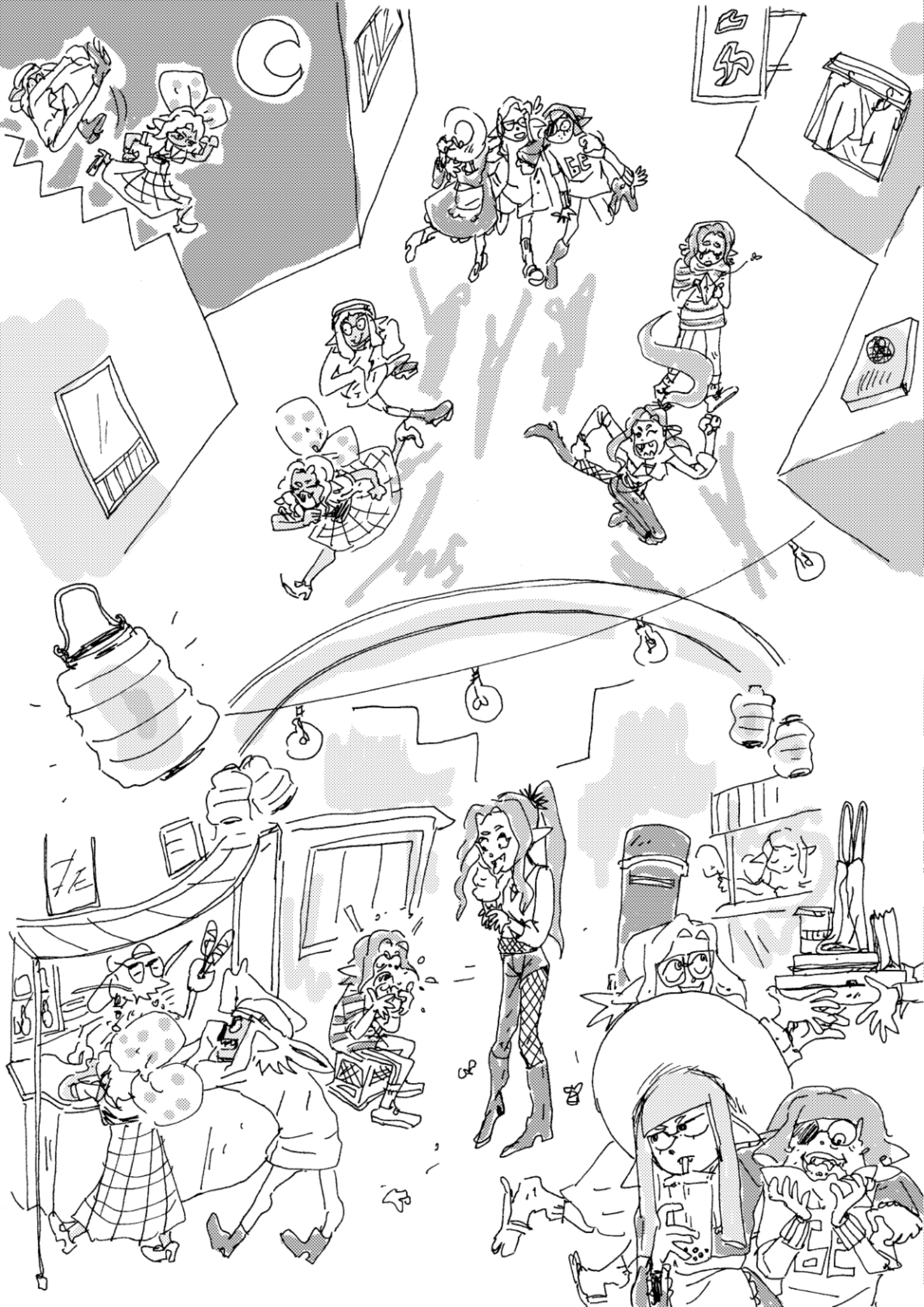
The stranger shuddered, the wind biting at his chitin skin, as he walked towards the missing can.

















The Inner Workings Of Ink Theory

An Interview From INKPOP Magazine

The jaw-dropping Jazz sensation Ink Theory was kind enough to respond and accept our interview request!

What you're about to read below came straight from their studio while working on their newest album!

Q1: I'm very excited to speak with all of you today. Thank you for accepting our interview request!

Karen: It's no problem, really. We've been thinking of doing one recently so your request came in at the perfect time!

Yoko: I was mainly against it, but in hindsight it's good for publicity...

Kitamura: That's right! This way more people can know what goes on behind the scenes.

Maya: It's a thing most bands experience in their life.

Yoko: True...

Zuzu: Interviews like these are way better than those from the paparazzi so for these answers I'll be genuine.

Oonie: I'll try and do my best.

Q2: Alright, let's get started! How would you describe your average recording session?

Karen: During the band's early days we recorded in a low budget studio, but, as our fan base grew, we were able to afford a much better one so sessions now go way more smoothly.

Kitamura: Maya helps me reach my drums!

Maya: Since me and Kitamura both play percussion, working with her during those just makes sense.

Yoko: I've been considering playing with a mute in my trumpet ever since the last few microphones kept breaking.

Oonie: They always go smoothly for me since I practice 30 minutes daily.

Zuzu: Recording kazoo was a problem at first but now I have figured it out by now.

Q3: What do your family and peers think of your music?

Karen: My old senior from music academy, Taka, was ecstatic when he found out I formed the band after I was inspired by his, Hightide Era. It's even what inspired our uniforms.

Oonie: My parents, at first, massively disproved of me being in Ink Theory but, after listening to our music, they begrudgingly accepted it.

Yoko: My younger sister bought our album on release and proudly shows it to her friends and our family. It makes me really happy.

Maya: My old teacher advised I become a music teacher after graduation, but I find being in Ink Theory a better experience.

Kitamura: My mom is super happy for me! She and my dad go to all our concerts and always screams out "That's my daughter!"

Q4: What is with your rivalry with Bottom Feeders?

Karen: They debuted at the same time as us. Naturally, competition was bound to happen.

Kitamura: I dunno really, they all seem like nice people.

Oonie: They're really confrontational about it, it's only fair if we attack back, plus battle of the bands are pretty fun with them. They make good celtic rock.

Yoko: All I know about them is that they're always at the brink of disbanding due to fights and stuff... I guess competition's in their blood.

Zuzu: Personally, I really don't dislike any of the band members except Finn Feeder. They really need to take an anger management class.

Maya: Like Karen said, it was simply a matter of debut time. If one of us debuted before or after the other I'm certain this rivalry wouldn't exist.

Q5: All of you have had musical education before forming ink theory, correct?

Karen: Top of my class in piano. I take pride in that accomplishment.

Oonie: My parents are musicians themselves so learning an instrument was basically a requirement.

Maya: I joined a few months after graduation, before I did some freelance work and still do some on the side.

Kitamura: I have years of experience in singing and percussion!

Yoko: I do have knowledge on trumpet and brass.

Zuzu: I went to an academy to learn music theory a few years ago





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Q6: What is the process like for making songs?

Karen: Generally we start playing things at random during practice and see what we like and, once we know that, we expand on them.

Yoko: To put it simply, we throw things at a wall and see what sticks. I wouldn't have it any other way...

Maya: While it does seem chaotic and random on paper, in execution it's a wonderful thing.

Oonie: It's a jam and a brainstorming session, twice the productivity, I like that.

Kitamura: It starts from pretty sounds and ends with music!

Zuzu: You'd be surprised how much we can get done through this method. Most of my parts in our music came from these sessions.

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Q7: Have you considered any collaborations with other bands?

Karen: We've been considering a collaboration with hightide era, though there being 2 pianos might cause a problem.

Maya: I don't really see a problem with another piano since me and Kitamura both play percussion.

Yoko: I wouldn't mind. Maybe you and Taka could play the piano differently

Kitamura: The more the merrier!

Zuzu: A collab would certainly get people talking about both of us.

Oonie: I'd love to have Nishida's guitar accompany my bass.

.....
Q8: So how did you all meet?

Karen: One day I was heading to a cafe and I heard Yoko playing trumpet on the street with a few others playing saxophone and trombone.

Yoko: She stood there listening for 15 minutes straight. Once we stopped playing she asked me if I was interested in joining her band.

Oonie: I wanted to find something to do without being under my parents watchful eye and Ink Theory was a perfect thing for that.

Kitamura: I was trying out some drums in a music shop and Miss Karen loved how I played them so she asked me to join!

Zuzu: I had nothing else to do after graduating. I looked around for bands to join, Ink Theory was the only one that accepted a kazoo player.

Maya: I heard some rumors that a top graduate of Kenban Academy was forming a band so I went to find out if they were true. I asked Karen herself and was accepted in.

.....
Q9: What got you all into music in the first place?

Karen: It was part of my education, but as time went on I grew to love it.

Yoko: I grew up near a community center and my grandpa's friend Martin led an orchestra that made wonderful music. That made me decide to learn trumpet, so that one day I would be able to join them.



Maya: I was always fascinated with the process behind music so I decided in my high school years to study music theory.

Zuzu: Playing kazoo was always an odd hobby of mine. I decided to learn proper music theory so I could play it better.

Kitamura: My mom suggested I try out some music programs at my school because I liked to sing when on walks!

Q10: Maya mentioned she does freelance work, do any of the other band members do something similar?

Karen: I play the piano at family gatherings.

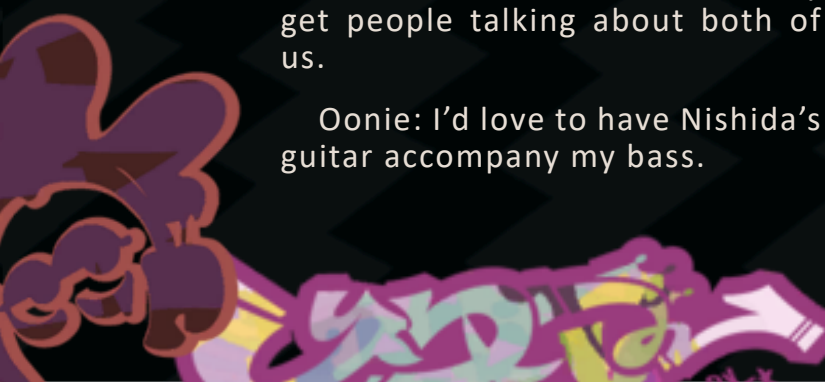
Zuzu: Nothing much for me. Ink theory is where I only play kazoo now.

Yoko: I play at my local community center when I have the time, and currently I'm working with Martin to turn his orchestra into an indie band. I'm not leaving Ink Theory, just taking a break from it to work on my own thing for now.

Kitamura: What Yoko's doing seems pretty fun! I used to sing in my school's choir.

Oonie: Sometimes my parents send over some instructors to teach me more "proper" music, but I always prefer my bass. As with Kitamura, I'm also interested in what Yoko's currently trying out.

Q11: These answers are amazing! I'll now move on to some questions for singular members if that's alright with all of you.



.....
Q12: Miss Kitamura, how do you feel about being the band's "mascot"?

Kitamura: I don't mind at all, I love it! So many people call me cute and adorable. All this praise makes me feel so loved!

Q: I'm glad you see it that way, I was worried you'd feel quite the opposite.

Kitamura: Thanks for the concern!
.....

Q13: Miss Yoko, many have said you get really nervous and shy before a performance. How do you calm down beforehand?

Yoko: No need for formalities, and yes I do get nervous before a performance. To calm down I simply do some breathing exercises and imagine my sister's in the crowd.

Q: That's a very good method to calm down!

Yoko: Thanks.
.....

Q14: Miss Karen, could you elaborate more on how your senior motivated you to form Ink Theory?

Karen: Of course. When I first started attending Kenban Academy, I was but a fledgeling in the world of piano, that is when I met Taka. He tutored me and got me to where I am today. When I graduated and learned he formed a band I was inspired to follow in his footsteps, this way I could thank him for all he has done for me.

Q: That's amazing!

Karen: I still think about it to this day. We meet for coffee sometimes.
.....

Q15: Now Miss Oonie, many times you've mentioned your parents. Do you still have problems with them?

Oonie: Yes, we're still distant. I am trying to forge a better relationship with them, and since they do approve of me being in Ink Theory now we seem to be going in the right direction.

Q: Any progress is good. I wish you best of luck.

Oonie: Thank you.
.....

Q16: Miss Zuzu, how do you feel about being considered the most popular member of the band?

Zuzu: I do like the popularity but I never want to overshadow the other members, they're my friends and I consider myself very close to them. They deserve the same amount of respect and time in the spotlight as I do.

Q: That's very considerate of you. You really deserve your popularity considering you're so humble.

Zuzu: Thank you. I'm glad I can be a good member of this wonderful band.
.....

Q17: Miss Maya, what would you consider your main reason for staying in Ink Theory despite being able to do freelance or becoming a music teacher?

Maya: Ink Theory allows me to use all the skills I've learned and put them into something amazing. I feel content whenever I hear one of our songs, it's the combined effort of several educated people in the art of music.

Q: I cannot argue with that. It's nice knowing you have a place where you feel you can belong.
.....

Q18: Last question, do you have any words for your fans?

Karen: Thank you for getting us to where we are today.

Maya: I may not be here all the time but thank you for being supportive nonetheless.

Yoko: I'm happy I'm able to share my music with all of you.

Kitamura: Thank you for listening to our music!

Zuzu: Thank you for letting my hobby grow into something more.

Oonie: Thank you for letting me do what I truly love.
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Q19: That's a wrap. Thanks again for having us today!

Karen: You're welcome, have a nice day.

Kitamura: Come back anytime!





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WHAT'S UP GUYS, AND
WELCOME BACK TO
GHOST HUNT SPLATLANDS.
I'M TARU, AND TODAY WE'RE
INVESTIGATING A RUMOR
SURROUNDING **BRINEWATER
SPRINGS.**

BRINEWATER GHOST HUNT

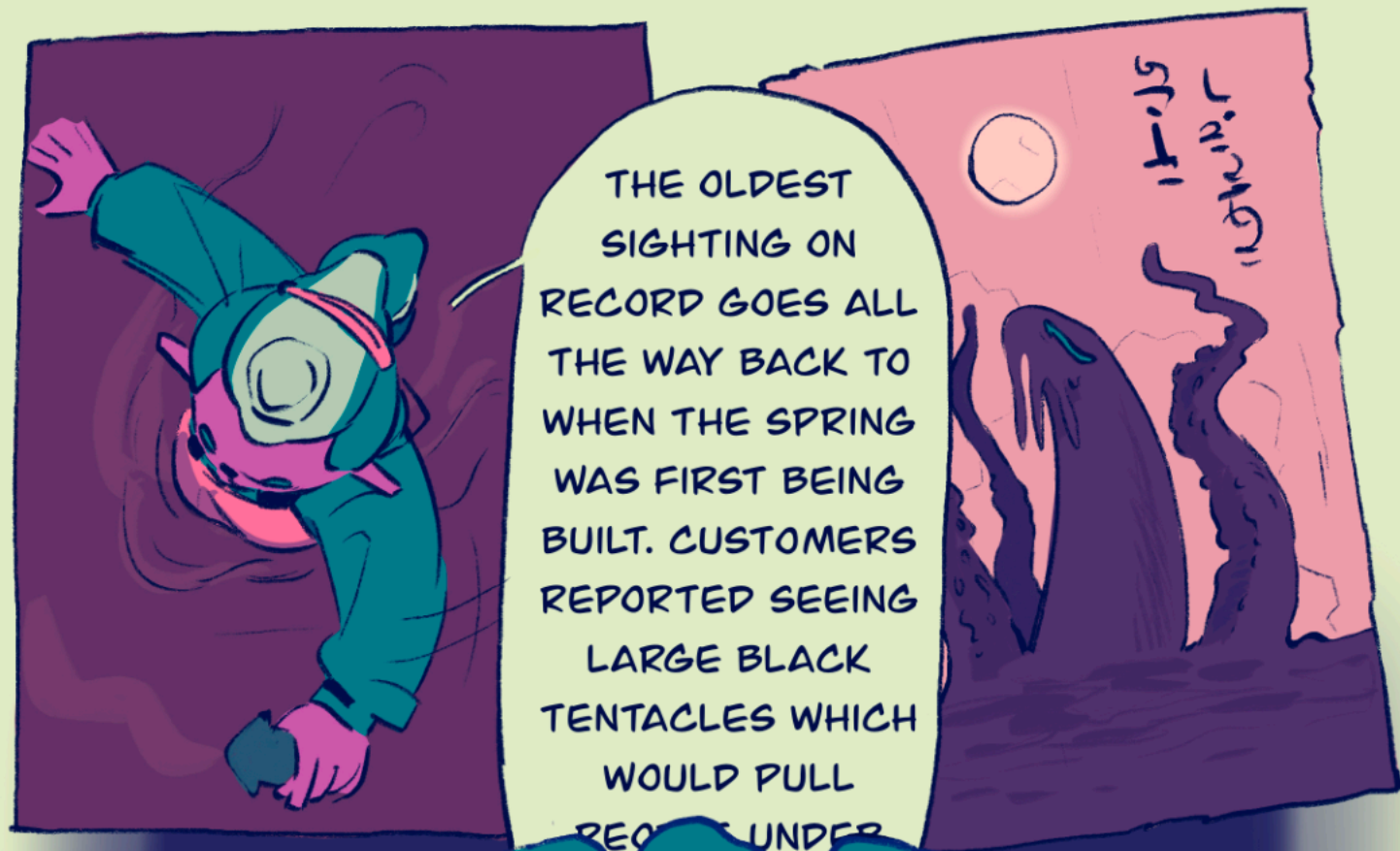
by Hades

STORIES TELL OF A
GHOST THAT HAUNTS
THE SPRINGS WITH ITS
MOANS OF AGONY.

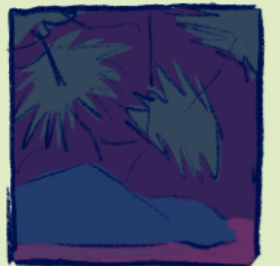
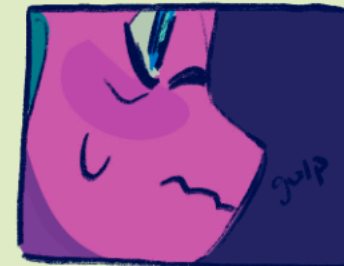
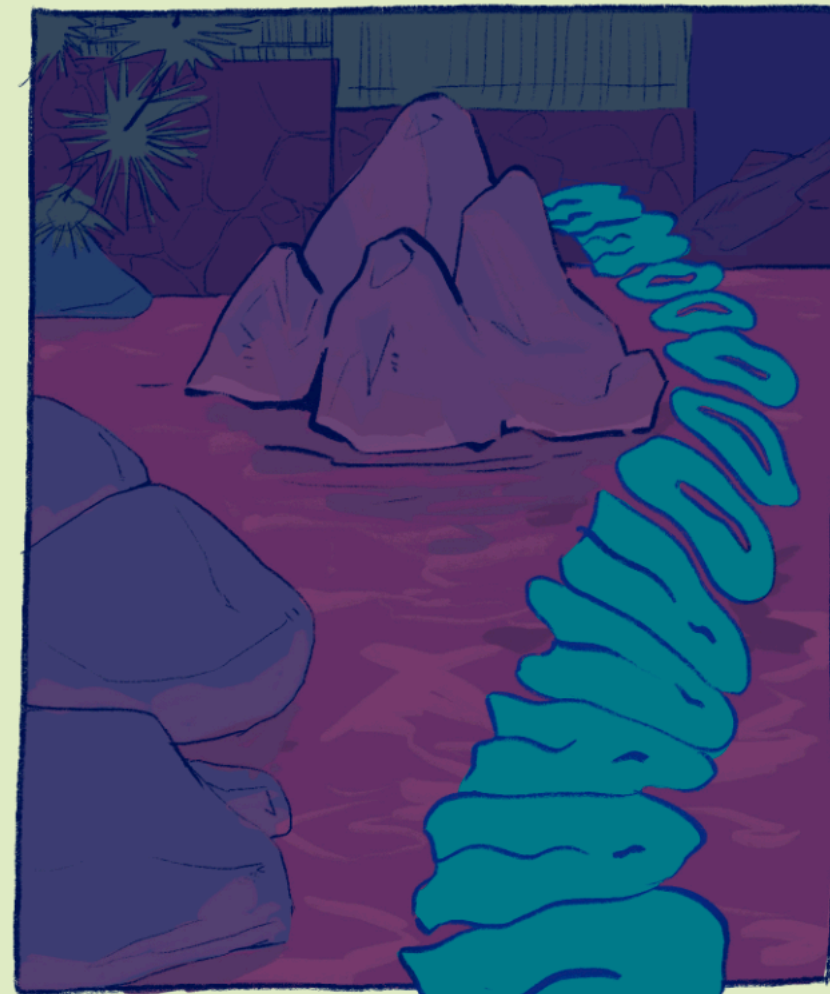
ACCORDING
TO LOCALS,
THE HAUNTINGS ONLY
HAPPEN ON THE NIGHT
OF A **FULL MOON.**

SINCE I'LL BE GETTING
WET TONIGHT, I
BROUGHT SOME
EXTRA GEAR
TO KEEP ME DRY

I HOPE MR.GRIZZ
DOESN'T MIND ME
BORROWING COMPANY
UNIFORMS...



BOOOOAAAAM







AH. OKAY. SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, I'LL GET GOING.

OH! ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT TO STAY AND RELAX? YOU LOOK A LITTLE STRESSED.

I'M ALRIGHT, THANK YOU.



DAMMIT!! I REALLY THOUGHT THIS ONE WAS THE REAL DEAL!



WELL GUYS, LOOKS LIKE THIS ONE IS JUST ANOTHER FOLK TALE..




I REALLY THOUGHT WE'D GET LUCKY TONIGHT, BUT I GUESS NOT. THAT'S KAY! I'M GUNNA' GET A REAL GHOST ON CAMERA ONE OF THESE DAYS, JUST YOU WAIT. TUNE IN NEXT WEEK WHEN I'LL BE INVESTIGATING THE UMAMI RUINS AND SOME RUMORS ABOUT A TALKING STATUE WITH GLOWING EYES. DON'T FORGET TO LIKE AND SUBSCRIBE SO YOU



THEY DIDN'T NOTICE TILL THEY WERE GOING THROUGH THE FOOTAGE THE NEXT DAY.



THANKS 4 READING 

PEARL

DON'T
GET COOKED

LOVE

STAY
OFF
THE
HOOK

MARINA









Stay Fresh, Never Frozen

A frosty chill lingers in the air above Inkopolis Square. Agent Eight instinctively adjusts her scarf as gusts of wind sweep repeatedly through the urban area. She tucks an auburn tentacle behind her ear as she glances towards the forlorn alley adjacent to Deca Tower. String lights adorn the corner cafe almost haphazardly. How different the subway station looks—painted in sepia hued light pollution from the surrounding buildings.

The nervous curiosity she had felt eight months ago dances in her stomach, images forming in her memories, as she recalls the differences between the bright summer skies she was greeted with when arriving on the surface. It was the first time she came to the surface as an ordinary girl. Could she consider herself ordinary?

After regaining her lost memories, she realizes that the sky simulations in the domes of Octo Canyon were very close to the real thing. However, the warmth was not artificial. Agent Eight thinks she prefers the summer heat now that her first winter has arrived—although with the change in season, vibrant holiday themed splatfests now follow.

Splatfests are at the epitome of Inkling culture as she now remembers. In the past, Eight had heard Octarian

soldiers gossiping about how loud and bright the festivities were to be able to reach the canyon from where they resided. A second challenger to DJ Octavio, Agent 4, brought a brief taste of that atmosphere to the domes when a foreign, yet heavenly melody began to play in the depths of her home.

Now, this vibrant metropolis up above was her new home.

This season in Inkopolis, the first ever Frosty Fest, pioneered by Pearl & Marina of Off the Hook—a popular pop duo formed by a rebellious inkling and charming octoling (although this went over citizen's heads)—is the talk of the town lately.

Pearl's voice reverberated through the city on the largest speakers of Deca Tower and every nearby radio. "Get ready for a special 48-hour FROSTY FEST!"

It's supposed to ring in the New Year and unite those who participate over how one should spend their holidays and with whom. There were only two choices for the recently announced theme, family or friends, yet Eight finds herself a little distraught by the question.

Because now there's Eight's found family: Pearl and Marina, the latter being her own personal idol she

admired more than any inkling who wasn't Pearl ever could (although Pearl had other feelings). Then there's her new friend Three: a stoic inkling who didn't always speak unless spoken to so their voice was rough around the edges.

After getting acclimated to turf war and participating for the last six splatfests, they're eager to climb to the top 100 ranking as a duo this time. Three usually decides their team begrudgingly, at the last minute, paying close attention to online polls to avoid the "popularity curse" as they call it.

One day, they're ignoring homework distributed over the break and krillin' time at a table outside of Crusty Sean's food truck. The chill still gets to Eight, while Three is unfazed, so she nurses a cup of hot chocolate nearby and lazily moves the sprinkles topping her half-eaten Galactic Swaffle with a plastic fork.

"You should really finish that before it freezes. Just kidding, it's not cold enough for that." Three whispers, without once taking their eyes off their phone screen.

Eight startles. "What—I—it is extremely chilly out, thank you very much!" She pouts towards the other agent and lowers her head into the collar of her parka for emphasis.

"You've been surviving for the last half hour just fine."

The octoling can't deny the deadpan remark and instead shifts the topic to splatfest. "What team is calling your name this time?"

"Probaby friends. I don't have very many," and Eight groans at this while Three hurries through their sentence, "aside from YOU but I've never been that close with my fam. Just being honest."

Eight thinks back to her initial understanding of familial structure and friendships. She never had time for such frivolous things as the pursuit of leisure when her coursework was so demanding. The focus was to build a better society for Octarians after all. Rewiring her brain to think of claiming turf for pure sport and enjoying vacation days or class trips is so brand new. She wants to make more friends now that she has been given the chance.

"I think... I will choose that team, too. Team Friends."

Three's eyes go wide. "Wait, really?! I thought you'd choose Family because of how close you are with Pearl and Marina."

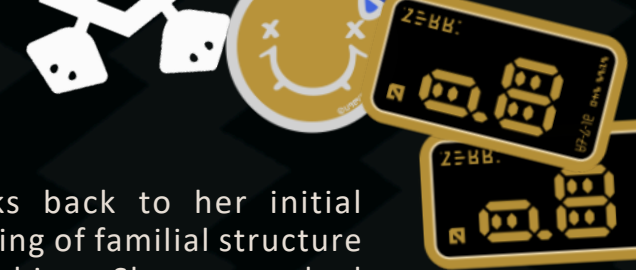
"Well, I have observed that friends can also become family." Eight hums.

"Huh. Guess I can't argue with that."

Later that night, Pearl lands a helicopter with Marina and Eight at Moray Towers. There's a stillness in the air that the trio appreciates—Pearl and Marina for a moment of solace from busy rehearsals and Eight for a break from another homework marathon with Three—and it feels refreshing to the mind and body.

Busy highways span the distance leading to areas beyond Greater Inkopolis, appearing as bright, amber electrical circuits from a birds eye view. Eight straps her E-Liter to her back as she prepares to enter recon mode.

This trip is mostly for practice but also just because she loves how the city looks here at night. Moray





would always hold a special place in her heart, as one of the first areas she and Three played turf war on and won.

Marina's cheerful voice siphons through Eight's headphones. "I can increase the timer amount but unfortunately can't disable it completely since we're not on one of my Shifty Stations. Go on, have fun!"

For a moment Eight felt as free as the wind, leaping from ink rail to ink rail, hearing her boots hit the icy ground as she took off running—exploring the wintry atmosphere to her heart's content. There were no other inkfish on the enemy team to worry about in recon mode. It was joyful. As the clock counted down to a minute, flurries of snowflakes cascaded from the sky.

"I really hope she's been enjoying life here." Pearl muses, watching delightfully as Eight reaches out with mitten covered palms to capture the snow.

Marina giggles and places a hand on Pearl's shoulder. "She is, even if she doesn't say it. Reminds me of myself when I first got here."

.....
The very next evening, Frosty Fest begins with a roar. Soon, battles for turf will take place under the champagne colored skies that have overtaken the Square lately. Fuzzy garland and sparkling ornaments decorate every building.

Three finds themselves pushing through crowds of inklings and octolings alike to reach the front of the Square where Eight stands. As expected, VIP access was given to Off the Hook's closest friends.

Pearl and Marina greet their audience with heartwarming smiles and light hearted quips as they take the stage, bedazzled in stunning silver and gold versions of their stage outfits.

Three chuckles at Eight's stunned face. "You're such a superfan, you know that? Thought you already got backstage access."

"I do but this is way different than just seeing the outfits on the designer table! Their tentacles are glowing!" Eight beams.

More voices are heard from the crowd behind them as Callie, Marie and a younger inkling with their tentacles in a yellow bob gather around Three. "Team Family? Way to skew the votes, yall." They glare down at their splatfest shirts, looking unimpressed.

Marie gives one of her signature smirks. "We let Callie choose. Don't think I'll play much tonight though."

Eight listens intently to the banter unfolding around her, soon becoming preoccupied with the soothing wintry bells playing from Deca Tower as they company Marina's chorus for Color Pulse.

She sighs and reaches into her pockets for her phone to preserve the moment with a photo.

"I would not mind another winter like this." Eight says, her lingering thoughts carried upon the chilly breeze.









Yeah don't worry about the utilities fees.

Big Man got it all covered.

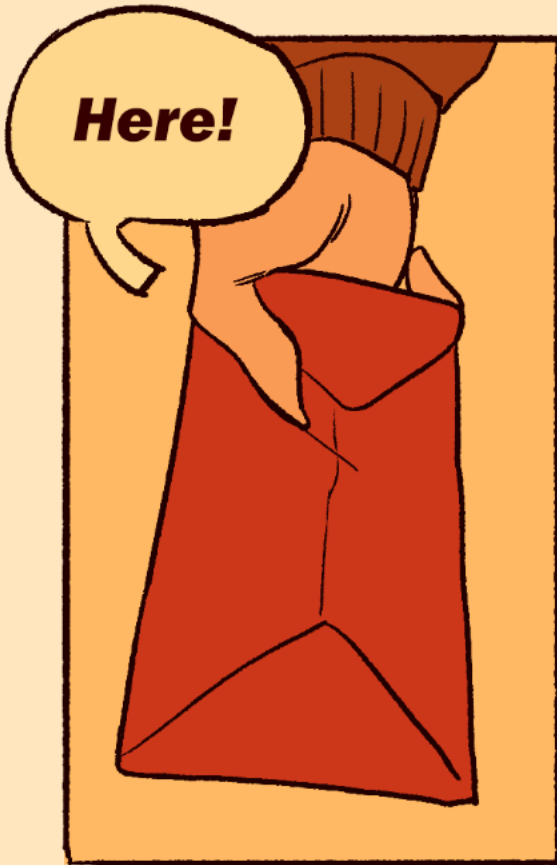
AY?!
(WE TALKED ABOUT SPLITTING BETWEEN US?!)



S Um, Three?

F HEY!!

DON'T MAKE THAT FACE!
You're not freeloading!!



Here!



S So! We managed to sell the treasure we got in Alterna!

And this is your share!

Plus the rent is 100g a week-

AY!
(SHIVER READ THE ROOM!)



Helping folks is just something we do, alright?

That's what the banditing is for!!



Despite Boss' boss kinda busted the whole thing,
Someone still paid a hefty price for it.

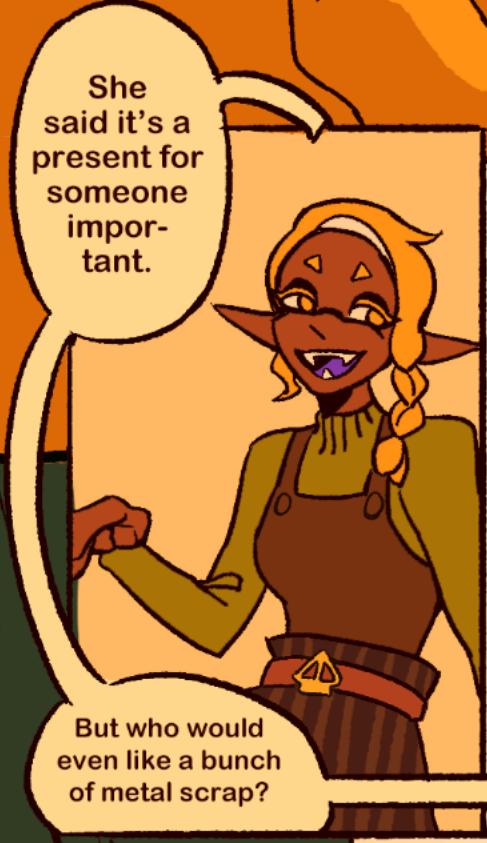
OH YEAH!!
It's some *rich lady* from Inkopolis!



Just think of this as a **Gift** from us, 'kay?



Also, before I forgot



She said it's a present for someone important.

But who would even like a bunch of metal scrap?



Hehe
Eyhe

Inkadians, am I right?



Three ...?





Starring Deep Cut in:

"Trouble in Splatville!"



Shiver was bored.

And she was pretty sure Frye felt the same, by the way the yellow inkling had been pacing restlessly for an hour now, to the point that Shiver was sure the floor was about to catch fire.

She would say Big Man was bored as well, just to exaggerate how antsy she was feeling at the moment, but the manta ray seemed to be enjoying himself, humming the vocals to his solo as he drank a soda and messed around with his Tableturf cards. Outside their dressing room, production staff rushed in and out carrying boxes and droning into their headsets, getting ready for their halftime group performance, the same as it always was.

Back when they were still fresh on the scene, Shiver would have been, well, shivering from all the excitement. The rush of being on camera, the backstage crew flocking to your every beck and call. It was showbiz. But now, after about a year of the same old routine, Shiver had gotten rather used to it.

It wasn't to say she hated her job as a splatcaster and splatfest team leader; no, not at all. She still loved

her job, and she loved how she got to do it with two of the closest friends in her life. It's just that... the glitz and glamor just ebbed away a little, leaving Shiver unsatisfied.

They barely had time to themselves anymore. If it wasn't splatcast upon splatcast every hour or so, it was the relentless amount of paperwork Marie had them doing every time they had a breather. The octoling couldn't even remember the last time they'd gone scrap hunting together.

Heck, When was the last time Deep Cut even had a day off?

She huffed. If only they could hang out together, just like old times when they went to their clan festivals together.

Wait.

Shiver had an idea. A very devious and potentially stupid idea, but if it worked...

"Psst. Hey. Frye." She half-hissed, half-whispered, beckoning the inkling over. Frye, alert from the lack of stimulation, perked up

and immediately beelined for her bandmate with an intrigued expression. "Isn't it starting to get... a little stuffy in here?"

"Cod, don't remind me," Frye whined, scrunching her face up in discomfort and dragging her indigo-tipped fingers down her face. "I'm burnin' up from all the energy I got inside of me! Arrghh, I don't understand why we gotta stay here for hours before our call, it's driving me nuts!"

"I can empathize," Shiver reassured solemnly, patting Frye on the back. "I actually had a brilliant idea. We've been working so hard recently; all three of us, and come to think of it, we'd never had the chance to check out the streets during a splatfest. So what if..."

She paused to build up the excitement, leaving Frye leaning in closer in anticipation.

"What if?"

"What if we took a little break this time? And checked out the splatfest festivities? Disguised, of course."

The yellow inkling immediately seemed to light up at the idea, catching Shiver's hands in her own. "Shiv, you're a genius! I've been so desperate to check it out, you've got no idea! I got my little sisters to grab me some tees and masks a while ago, so you must've put two n' two together and deemed them to be crazy good disguises! This is why you're our team leader, y'know! Let's grab Big Man and put this master plan into action!"

"Wh- I mean, yes, thank you, I did," Shiver coughed, bulldozed by the compliments and having definitely known that Frye in fact, had disguises on her.

"Hey, Big Man!" Frye crowed, and the manta looked over from his collection curiously. "Whaddya say we blow this popsicle stand and get some air? Check out the stomping grounds?"

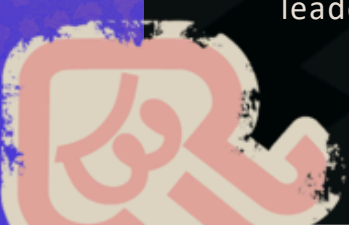
Big Man screwed up his brow, looking unconvinced.

"Ay, ay...(Guys, I'm not so sure about this...)" He pressed his flippers against each other anxiously. "Ay? (Can't we just wait until our gig's over?)"

"No can do, Big Man!" Frye jumped up onto the coffee table, almost sending the startled ray toppling backward with his cards. "I wanna check out the pop-up stalls! Every time I can smell em' from our float it drives me nuts! If I have to go another splatfest watching peeps eat those bombastic lookin' seaweed wraps and deep-fried sea dogs without me havin' a bite, I. Am. Going. To. Lose. It!" She stamped her foot on each word.

"I've always wanted to check out the games," The octoling beside her chimed in, closing her fan with a snap after regaining her composure. "They remind me of the smaller festivals back home, and I haven't played them since I was just a little kid. Don't you feel the same, Big Man? Don't you just want to relive your days as a manta pup?"

"A-ay... (I-I do....)" The manta stammered. "Ay! Ay... (But we can't just ditch our gig! We're gonna get our paycheck after the splatfest, and I don't want to risk missing out on it...)"





"C'mon!" Frye begged, clasping her hands together. "We won't even get caught! I have disguises n' everything!"

"Ay... (We can't...)"

"Big Man," Shiver said suddenly. "I have a proposition. Haven't you noticed... That you're missing out on some tableturf cards?"

"Ay? Ay?" (What? That's impossible!)" The ray's attention immediately snapped to her.

Shiver opened her fan, using its opaque surface as a mock privacy screen. "Rumor's out on the street that kids can get some pretty exclusive cards during splatfests." Big Man, ever the tableturf enthusiast, couldn't resist leaning closer in anticipation as she whispered. "I've heard that you'd be able to get some.... special edition cards." She sighed, feigning resignation, beckoning her hand so her fan folded onto her arm. "But, if you're not willing to risk it, guess they'll be gone forever..."

"Ay? Ay? (What are they? What are they?)" Big Man cried out, having fallen hook, line, and sinker. "Ay, ay! Ay! (Shiver, I'm begging! You gotta tell me!)"

Bingo.

Shiver gave the manta a gleaming, shark-toothed smile. "I heard that if you're lucky you'd be able to get..." Her words paused on each climactic breath. "...Splatbands. Foil. Cards."

.....
"Wow, I'd never gotten out of the studio this quick before, Big Man!" Frye patted the manta's back brightly as he placed his flippers

on his face. "That's gotta be a new record somewhere! You even snuck us past all the production staff and everything!"

"Ay...(Just let me think about my bad choices in peace...)"

"Now that we're out here," Shiver peeked her head round the corner of the metro and the splatcast building they were squished between. "Where's the disguises you've promised us, Frye?"

"Hold onto your tentacles, Shiv," Frye said giddily. "I got my little sisters to send me a little somethin'..." With a flick of her wrist, three masks appeared in her hands like magic. "Wham! Some splatfest masks! Some kids like to wear our masks to support our teams, and with these, we'll look just like any old sea folk in the crowd! I also got some splatfest tees to really sell it!"

"Ay, ay... (Wow, you really thought of everything...)" Big Man took his mask and placed it over his face. "Ay? (How do I look?)"

"Just like any old Big Man fan." Shiver's voice was muffled under her own mask, and she beckoned the two over. "Now come on, let's split before the crew connects the dots."

The members of Deep Cut all tentatively stepped out into the light of the street and... nothing.

"It worked!" Frye exclaimed. "No one's even batting an eye!"

"Ay, ay. (Let's get further away from the splatcast building, just in case.)"

They took the back alleys, past the jubilant chimes of Grizzco's open doors and kids lining up to scrub their tees at Murch's usual spot;

sneaking through the back plazas where the tableturf dojo held their big tourneys, and there they were.

Frye knew these streets with the back of her hand, having lived here for half her life, and she knew how the city seemed to thrum with a different sort of life at night; especially during splatfests. But being in the fray, instead of being perched high above it was so... different.

The streets were filled with the aromatic smell of greasy street food and all sorts of fancy decor, and all sorts of sea life flocked to the square to dance the night away. Gloopy little inkfish kids begged tired guardians for gold coins to play amateurishly set-up game stands. By the turf lobbies, older inklings and octolings gathered with their weapons to take part in the good fight and win for their teams.

Even some of the apartment building tenants hung banners and waved glowsticks from their balconies, bringing the festivities of the splatfest into their homes and into the less lively parts of the city.

Fluorescent neon lights flashed and burned the edges of her vision in a flamboyant explosion, filtering the dull grays and browns of the buildings and pavement. Indigo. Scarlet. Butterscotch. An outburst of vivid colors swirled around in her vision, the sensation like a nostalgic fever dream.

It was chaotic. It was messy. It was their city, and Frye couldn't believe they'd been missing out on all of... this.

Maybe she was still a little peeved about that. Maybe it was a little sad, a little melancholy; reminding her of how she'd been missing out on her own clan's festivals back home. But...

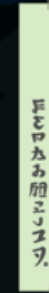
But...

"Well, what are we waiting for?" Shiver interrupted Frye's train of thought, and she caught a glimpse of the octoling's own awe-filled expression beneath her mask, the corners of her mouth slowly forming a gleaming crescent-shaped smile, and Frye could feel her own lips twitch to match hers. "Let's enjoy ourselves, shall we?"

"Ay, Ay! (Aye aye, Captain!)"

Frye laughed lightly and pulled her mask down to ground herself in the moment, before spreading her legs into a ready stance. "If our leader says we should, then we shall."

.....
Much to the insistence of Frye and Big Man, Shiver got to go first, declaring that the first spoils should go to their leader. Shiver was all too happy to oblige, humming as she browsed through the game stalls, eyeing all the prizes hanging from their hooks. Fluffed-up cushions deco-ed with sea bunnies, gangly octopi with uneven stitching; bug-eyed cartoon squids, and even those creepy Wahoo World mascot plushies that may or may not have been bootlegs. They were all mostly easy wins, but Shiver wasn't interested in them.



But the one thing, the one thing that Shiver had her eyes on was the large shark plush sequestered comfortably in the middle of it all, strung up like a prize catch or a monstrous trophy, leaving kids all around to gawk at it in astonishment. Frye, upon seeing the massive toy herself, elbowed Shiver playfully. "I take it that you gotta have it?"

"It's absolutely glorious," Shiver breathed, stretching a hand outwards from afar. "I must have it."

"Ay ay! (Then let's go get it!)"

As they approached, Shiver's energy dimmed a little upon seeing exactly *what* kind of booth it was. Sure, her impeccable aim allowed her to dominate in all things aim, but there were some things that her expertise with the tri-stringer couldn't help her with.

One of those things was the ring toss.

No wonder the shark plushie was untouched. And no wonder the jellyfish manning the stall looked so smug, as if taunting her that the prize would never be hers, or anyone else's.

"To shell with that," She grouched, stomping over to the stall and sprinkling some coins on the table, grabbing the jellyfish's attention. "10 rings, please."

A basket of rings slid over to her, and the jellyfish pointed at the golden bottle in the middle and burred twice. Two rings on the golden bottle.

Shiver, under her mask, only responded with a smile that was all teeth. She was going to get that prize, tri-stringer experience or not.

A nail-biting minute later, eight rings lay on the floor.

Well, she was sort of expecting that. Ring toss was impossible and a scam anyway.

"Hey, maybe me and Big Man can turn the tables! Fork over the last two rings!"

Shiver, a little confused, handed them over, and watched as Frye swept her foot eccentrically as if she were throwing a home run baseball, and Big Man clumsily fumbling with the ring in his flippers as if it were covered in butter. "It's okay, guys. I don't mind if I don't—"

Clink. Clink. She watched two rings clatter onto the golden milk bottle, laughing at her.

"Score!" Frye cheered, high-fiving Big Man.

It left the dumb-stricken jellyfish floundering to unhook the prize from the rafters, and Shiver to almost grumble at how easy it was for her crew. But she was thankful, and all grievances and embarrassments were forgotten the moment the plush flopped into her arms, swallowing her with its massive flippers and dopey, gaping maw; instead, she was left smiling like an idiot underneath her mask.

What was she without her crew?

Definitely someone without a huge, 4-foot shark plushie.

.....

It was Frye's turn next, in which she took to the food stalls like piranhas to a feeding frenzy. Whether it was takoyaki balls, deep-fried tempura, or even soy-dipped dango,

they were no match for Frye's endless appetite. Shiver and Big Man, meanwhile, kept themselves satisfied with some spiced meat skewers and sour candied apples, taking leisurely bites under their masks.

It was no surprise that Frye hitting all the food stalls hard like a barrage of tenta missiles, that she'd eventually crash into a Splatville-standard eating contest. The 10,000 gold reward was nothing in the face of her upbringing in the Unagi Clan or even her job as a splatcaster, but to a treasure-hunting bandit like her, any amount of treasure was still treasure.

Before Shiver or Big Man could even say anything, Frye had written down a goofy moniker to conceal her identity on the competition board, and she was up on the stage with all the other contestants. "Guys! Cheer for me!"

"We both know she's going to crush the competition, right?" Shiver said, watching the inkling bound off to compete. "It's not even going to be a fair fight."

"Ay, ay. (I almost feel a little bad for those kids.)"

Needless to say, it wasn't a competition. It was a one-sided massacre, at the hands of "Madame Moray". Among the groaning inkfish kids and other defeated-looking sea life, Frye stood on the table, face half-obscured by her mask but with a triumphant grin plastered on her face. She gleefully accepted the pouch of coins and ran back over to the two, showing off her winnings.

"Guys! Guys! Look, I won!"

"We never doubted you for a bit," Shiver said affectionately, honest in every sense.

.....

Finally, it was Big Man's turn.

It wasn't hard to see that the manta ray was particularly elated as he finally got to the general pop-up stores in the festival, his long tail swishing in short, excited arcs, like a dogfish puppy chasing a ball. He certainly stood out amongst the kids shopping at the stalls, a giant, looming figure in a sea of smaller creatures. Not that Shiver or Frye were complaining, it made it easier to find their friend in the frenzy.

Big Man's eagerness only grew when he finally spotted the lone tableturf stand, and he almost bowled over several customers in his zeal to finally get the cards he was waiting for. "Ay! (Excuse me!)"

The stall owner, a wizened old sea dragon, looked up from organizing his stock to face the newcomer. "Aren't ya a fresh face? Come 'ere to shop for tableturf cards, eh?"

"Ay! (Yes sir!)" The manta ray bobbed his head. "Ay, ay! (I'd like the Splatbands set, please!)"

The sea dragon chuckled, stroking a fin over his leafy beard. "You have a good eye, sonny! Got lotsa kids scramblin' all over these things. An' you're in luck! Got the last set right ere'. That'll be 7500, not a cent under or over it."

Big Man, barely able to stop himself from shaking in anticipation, handed over the coins and held out his flippers to receive his bounty. However, just as the shopkeeper

leaned over, his eyes narrowed, and Big Man began to sweat. Uh oh.

"Hey, wait a darn minute... Don't you look an awful lot like that dancing manta ray? Y'know, uh—"

"A-Ay! Ay. (I-Ian BGM! Ian BGM.)" The panicked idol blurted out. "Ay, ay. (I did a collab with the Squid Sisters, you must've recognized me from there.)"

"Ah, yes, that must be it!" The old sea dragon exclaimed cheerfully, handing over the card pack. "Lotsa young folk getting out there n' makin' a name for themselves. Who knows what other celebrities are gonna walk into my shop? Mayhaps, Deep Cut—"

"Ayayayay. (Okaysirlreallymustbegoing.)" Big Man gave a quick bow and ran before the shopkeeper could make any more chance guesses. "Ay! (Thanks for the cards!)"

"Funny kid," The old sea dragon mused as he moved on to the next customer.

.....
With all the activities marked off the list, Deep Cut retreated back into the alleyway to reflect on their bounty.

"Cod, I'm stuffed!" Frye slid her mask back to reveal a fanged grin. "I feel like I've eaten enough to feed all my eels combined!"

"I've amassed a sizable catch myself." Shiver cast a satisfied arm around her newly acquired shark plush. "I've already dubbed it Master Mini."

"Ay, ay, ay..." Big Man hummed contentedly, flexing his fins back and forth to admire the holo-foil

on his new cards. "Ay, ay! Ay—(You guys were right, this was worth it! Now let's go back to the studio so that we can—)"

All of a sudden, he seemed to stop dead in his tracks.

"Big Man?" Shiver said, confused as to why he cut off. "Just what are you staring at—" She turned around to see what the quivering manta ray was looking at and immediately all her fight drained out of her body. "—that's making you freeze... like that...."

Frye, sensing how both her accomplices seemed to deflate in submission, turned around to look as well, only to get caught in the gaze of their proclaimed boss, Marie. Behind her, Callie was the exact opposite of her cousin; smiling widely and waving a greeting; not that it did anything to quell their fear.

"Ay... (We're cooked...)" Big Man sounded as defeated as he looked.

"Where have you three been?" The green-tipped inkling snapped, crossing her arms. "Your production staff have been razing the entirety of Splatville looking for you! You all know better than to dip before the show starts!"

The members of Deep Cut almost immediately fell onto their knees. Shiver and Frye bowed deeply in apology, tentacles brushing the floor, while Big Man clumsily did the approximation of bowing by tilting his head forward in shame.

"Ay, ay....(Sorry, boss...)"

"It's just that—"

"We wanted to get a taste of the splatfest street festivals too, since we're always up on stage dancing when they happen..."

Marie rubbed the black band across her nose with her gloved hand, sighing deeply. "It's not me you should be apologizing to, it's the staff on the splatcast. Cod, you three are going to make my tentacles go gray prematurely...."

"How did you even find us so quickly? We had disguises and everything!"

"Oh!" Callie perked up, pulling her phone out to show the trio a picture on Inkstagram. "People put two and two together and figured it out, we just followed the trail. It was pretty obvious, you did just change clothes and use cheaper versions of your clan masks. There's a whole splashtag just for taking pictures of you guys in costume tonight!"

Callie's words were cheerful and nonchalant, but every sentence seemed to drive spears into the hearts of Deep Cut, and they all seemed to crumple even further into themselves.

"Yeowch..." Frye groaned. "Somehow hearin' that hurts me more than Marie's feedback on my new dance moves..."

"A-ay? (D-does this mean we're gonna get fired?)" Big Man flailed his flippers. "Ay! Ay ay! (I can't! I'm not going back to working at Mako Mart part-time!)"

"What—? No, you're not getting fired." Marie frowned. "We talked with the production crew on your schedules, and they've agreed to let you have a one-hour performance at the start of each map change effectively immediately, rather than the ten-minute break intervals you've been having per rotation.

Sure, some kids aren't gonna be able to hang out on the floats, but I'm sure they're willing to empathize with you three after today."

"You also get off two hours before a splatfest ends!" Callie chimed in. "Marie reasoned that your work hours shouldn't be so long, especially when you're singing or dancing to boot. She looked real concerned when she asked for your work schedules on Splatfests!"

Upon hearing this, Deep Cut immediately went back for another bow, this time one out of thankfulness rather than remorse.

"Boss!" Frye cried out joyfully, almost looking like she was on the verge of crying. "So you do really care about us!"

"Of course she cares about you three! Did you know we also used to sneak out sometimes in disguises? She just doesn't want to do all the paperwork now that she's sort of your second boss—"

"What I think Callie is *trying* to say is—" Marie cut in, clamping a hand around Callie's mouth. "—Is that I don't want to see the three of you get exploited like we were back when we first became idols. Being newscasters is tough work, but being idols during splatfests on top of that is tiring."

She sighed tiredly. "The point of a splatfest is to celebrate life. A life where we can all relax and enjoy ourselves to the fullest and look forward to the future. And if you three have to sneak out every

time you want a break or want to experience something, then it's hypocritical for the splatfest to be celebrated, no?"

"Ay...(You're right...)" Big Man rubbed an uneasy flipper at the back of his head. "Ay, ay. (I guess since we were all super fresh to the scene, we didn't realize it was unreasonable.)"

"It means a lot." Shiver dipped her head, still looking a little flabbergasted as she ran red-tipped fingers through her fringed tentacles. "Thanks a lot, boss."

"So, what now?" Frye asked, brushing off her pants and getting to her feet. "Are we gonna have to go back to the studio to face the heat?"

"Well, the last time I checked, it's the last two hours before the splatfest ends," There was a rather smug grin on Callie's face, and even the corners of Marie's face twitched in mischief. "So you three are off the hook!"

"And speaking of Off The Hook, we were actually planning to meet up with them. You're all free to come with, I'm sure they'd love to meet you three." Both the Squid Sisters began walking out of the alleyway and into the still bustling streets of Splatville. "But you're also free to enjoy the rest of the splatfest."

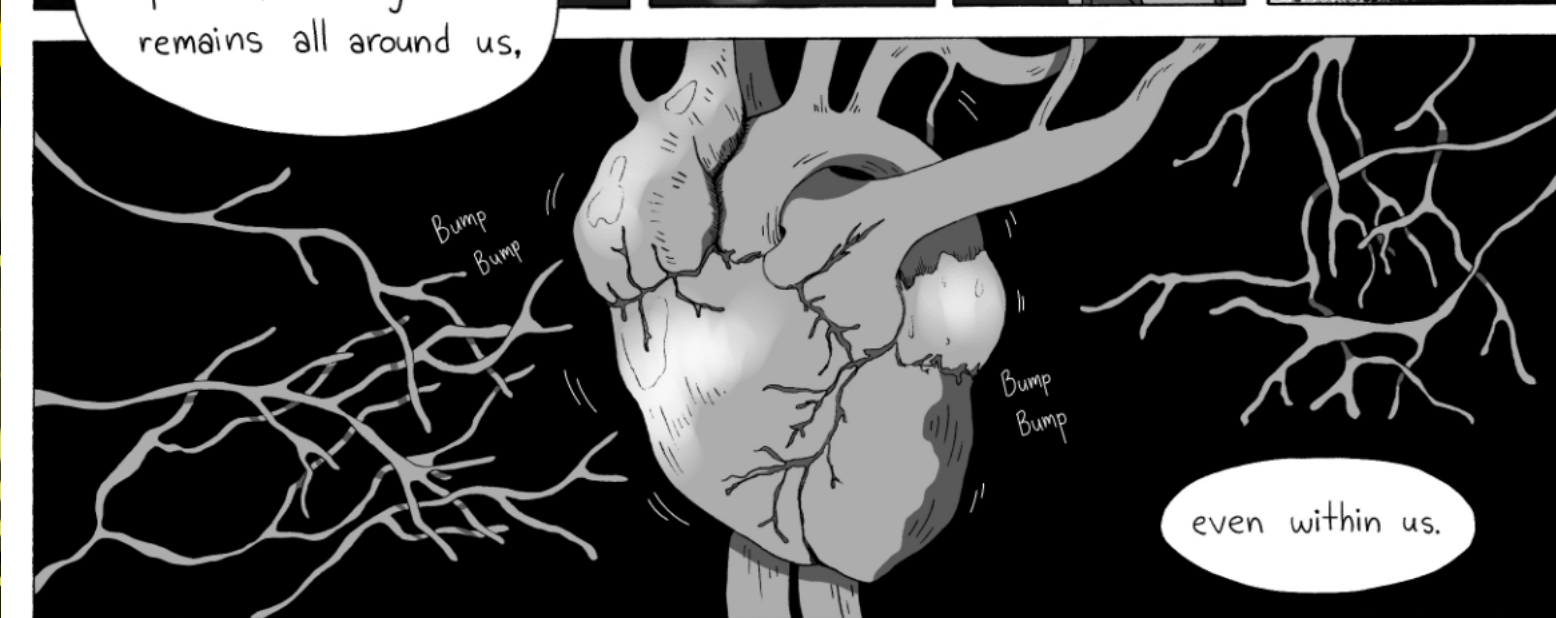
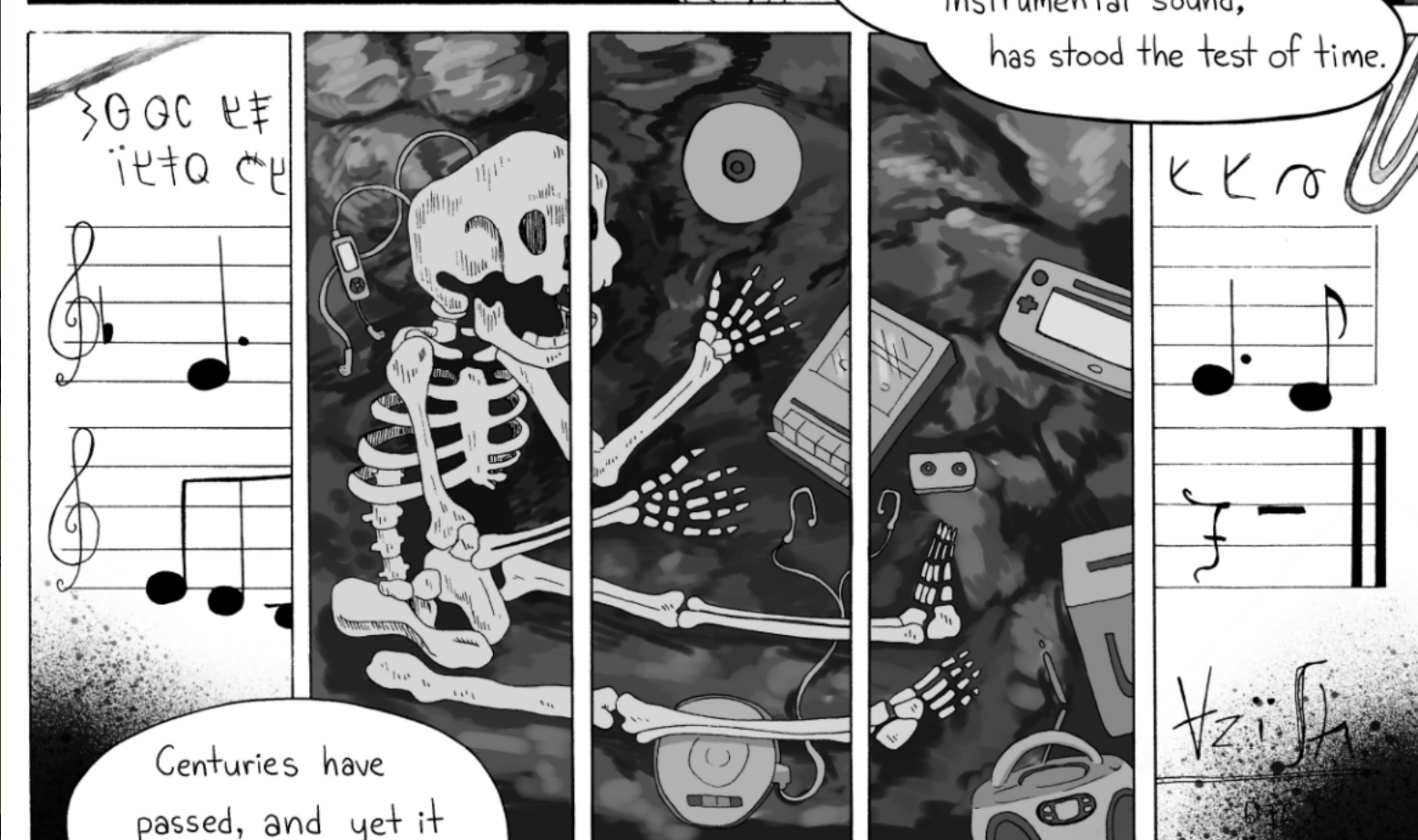
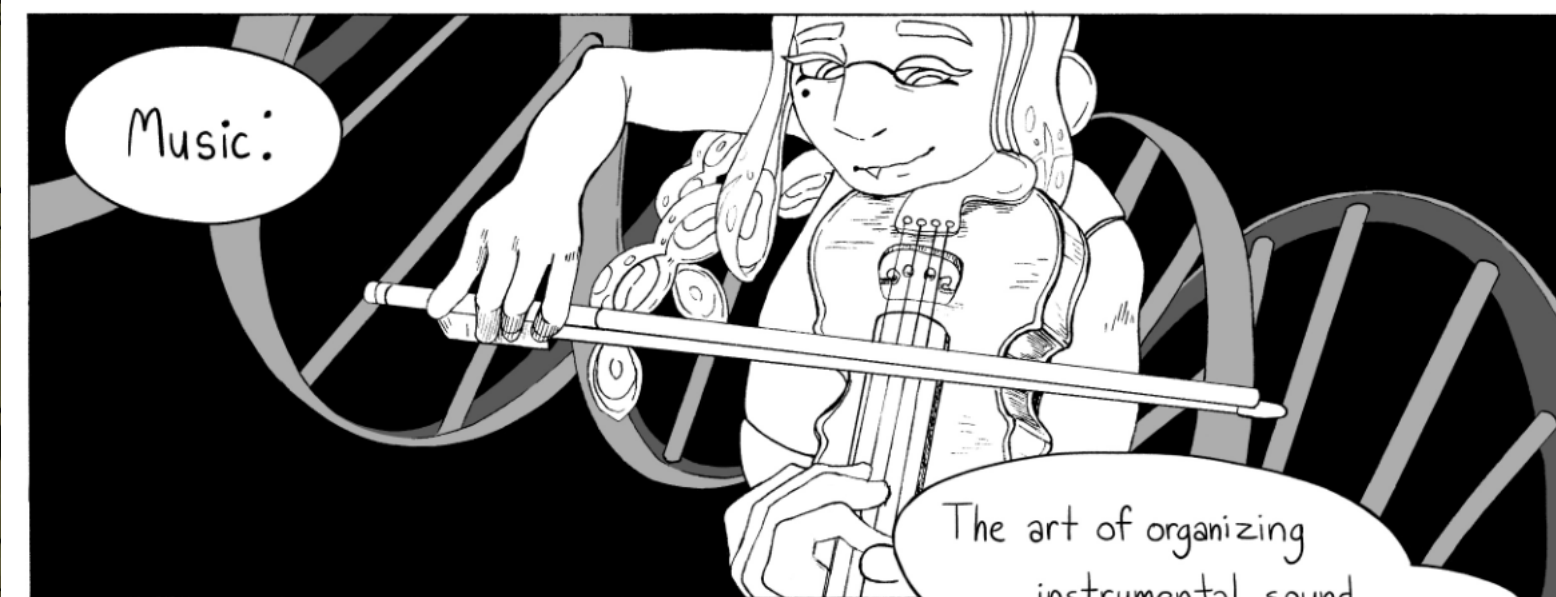
There was a pause. The members of Deep Cut seemed to hesitate to follow.

And then they scrambled after the two idols, smiling and laughing with each other without a single care in the world, just three young seafolk ready to live their lives to the fullest; for what is the splatfest if not a celebration of life?

The certain thing the three of them knew, was that they were happy to celebrate their lives together, as Deep Cut.









No matter
where you are,



you can stand still,
close your eyes,
and listen to the rhythms
of everyone's lives.



Isn't that special?



It not only brings us
closer together, but it makes
our voices known in the
world for years to come.

We can tell listeners,
"Hello! I'm here,
I'm known,
I exist,
and so do you."
Isn't that beautiful?

Why pour hours
into this craft
if not to share a
piece of yourself
with others?



No matter
how abrasive,



how timid,



how eclectic
you may be,



there will always be a
melody that can make you
feel seen,

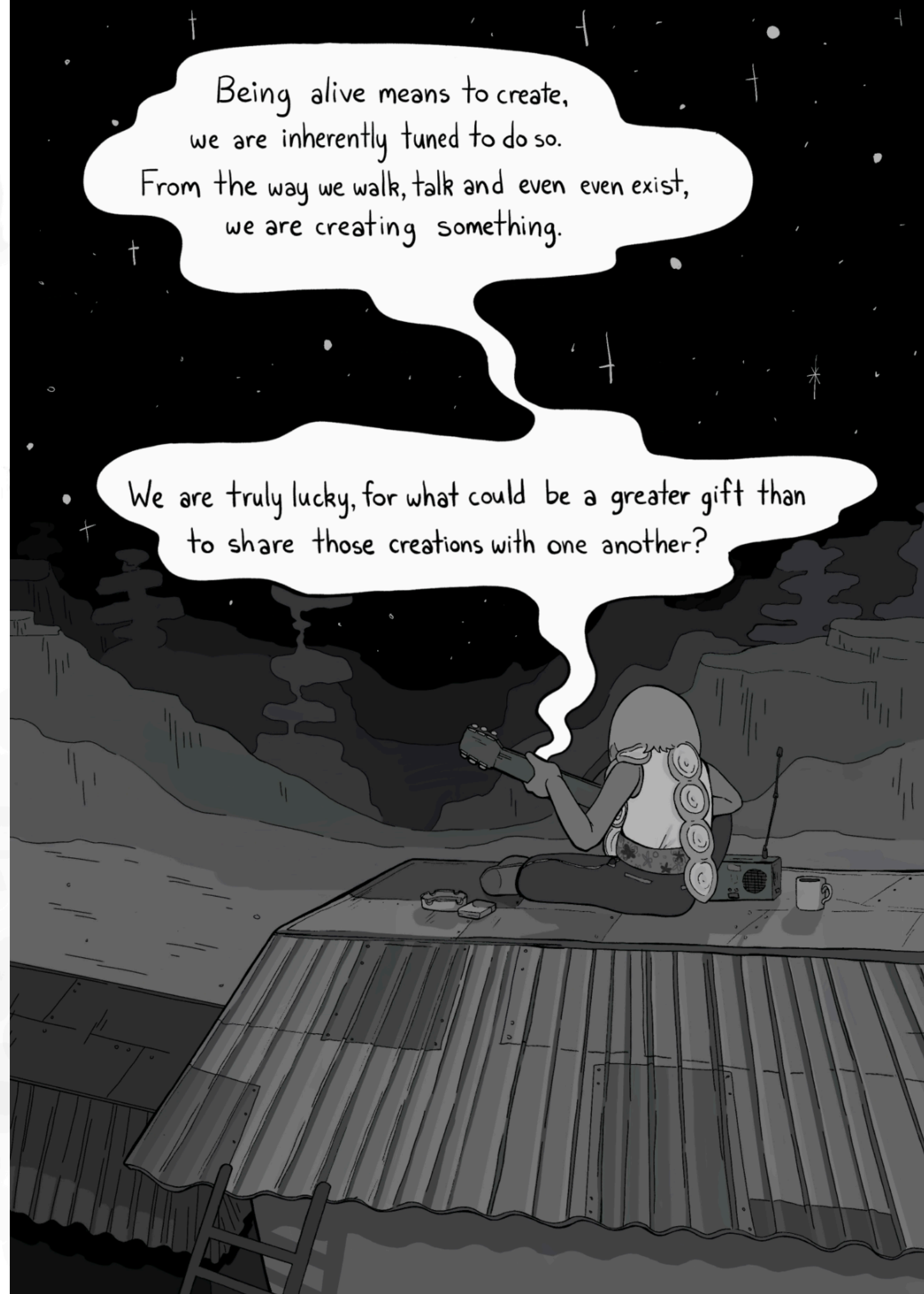


heard in a way
unlike anything else.

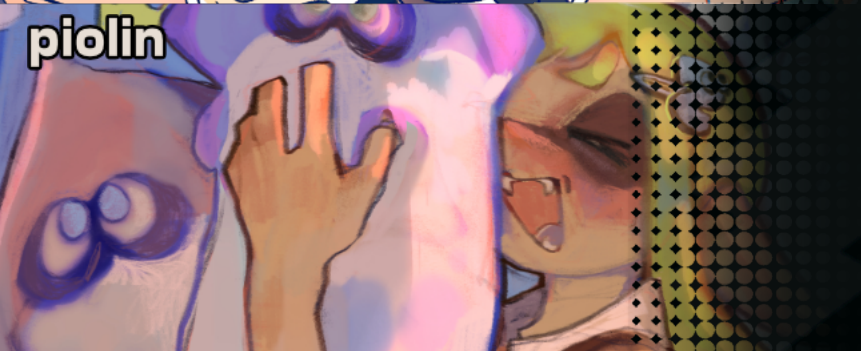


Being alive means to create,
we are inherently tuned to do so.
From the way we walk, talk and even even exist,
we are creating something.

We are truly lucky, for what could be a greater gift than
to share those creations with one another?



Contributor credits



Oh to be a little squid travelling around with my little octopus friend... Thank you for supporting the zine— we hope you guys enjoy it!! Stay silly! ٩(< 3)(>)٩

INSTAGRAM: @oedemeridae

TWITTER: @ryoko6318

Always remember it's not about the turf war, but the squids you battle with (and whatever the octolings are doing)

INSTAGRAM: @piolin.pup

TWITTER: @flabberduckie

We've been friends for a little more than a year now, and Splatoon was the main thing that got us together, so for my part (Dia) I'm really happy we got the instance to collaborate in this piece! Yay to the plaza and the cool people we meet in there!

COPITO'S TUMBLR: @cheermiko

DIA'S TWITTER: @diamandarinas

Splatoon has always been the most welcoming medium to enjoy with company. This piece is a reminder for that!

TWITTER: @Cyodorake

Tysm for reading :-)

TWITTER: @Sythiia

TUMBLR: @Sythiia

Guy who plays too much salmon run voice: The chunks situation is dire.

TWITTER: @lightredfox

TUMBLR: @lightredfox

Night market adventures with Ari & Boe!

TWITTER: @kyealtia

INSTAGRAM: @kyealtia

this was my first zine and second time doing 3d illustration!!! thank you mods for letting me get away with that, i had a lot of fun :0)

INSTAGRAM: @geocurse

TWITTER: @geocurse

Shoutout to all the coffee addicts in the chat <3

TWITTER: @PsandaBear

INSTAGRAM: @PsandaBear





munch



TWITTER: @munchbox_art

TUMBLR: @munchboxart

i'm so so happy i got the opportunity to work for such an amazing zine and finally had the chance to do something i really love. hope y'all have fun reading my work!

TWITTER: @_palmeritas

razel_v0



TWITTER: @razel_v0

INSTAGRAM: @razel_v0

TWITTER: @toldentops

TUMBLR: @palossssssand

fandoe

Meeting a rising star: pro X-rank player crim5on

I thoroughly enjoyed being a part of this zine! Getting the chance to develop some new characters for it was also very fun :]

TUMBLR: @fandoe0

TOYHOUSE: @fandoe

GRIZZTAR FOREVER

TUMBLR: @monicracar

INSTAGRAM: @monicracar

Diansakhuart



TWITTER: @diansakhuart

INSTAGRAM: @diansakhuart

INK THE WALLS IN SALMON RUN I BEG OF Y-

TWITTER: @Kuronekocain

TUMBLR: @Fiyrball6063

Catsupy



TWITTER: @Catsupy_Art

TWITTER: @plectronoceras

TUMBLR: @shadowsplice

palmer



Toldentops



Moni

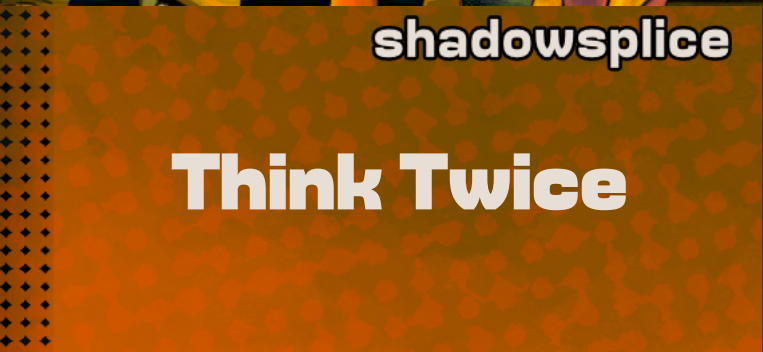


Fiyrball



shadowsplice

Think Twice





Sprite

TWITTER: @LOCALSPRITE
TUMBLR: @tentatechnologies



dvdFu

TWITTER: @dvdFu
INSTAGRAM: @dvdFu



Nalina.nw

TWITTER: @Nalina_nw
TUMBLR: @Nalina-nw



Kody

Hope you all enjoy the zine, everyone worked very hard on it! I'm so happy I was given the chance to contribute, especially towards a great cause as well.

TWITTER: @H3llnaut
INSTAGRAM: @H3llnaut



LEIXO_DEMO

A different interpretation of DEDF1SH before sanitation and their close friend.

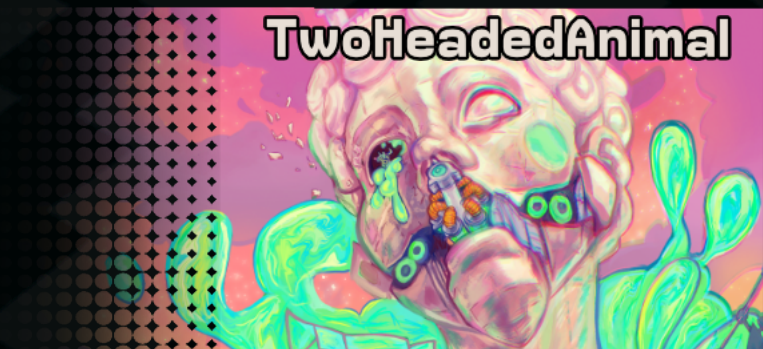
TWITTER: @Leixo_Demo

Squid: Agent 8's struggle to escape the Deep Sea Metro was a really cool stroy for me and i wanted to try and illustrate that. I hope that no matter how big your struggles are, you can overcome them with flying colours!

CLOWN'S TUMBLR: @ClumsyClown
SQUID'S TUMBLR: @SquidDied

stay cool!!

TWITTER: @Loafbud
TUMBLR: @Loafbud



TwoHeadedAnimal



LOAFBUD



BUGSLAP!!

TWITTER: @bugsslap
INSTAGRAM: @bugslap



redeyedsheepskull

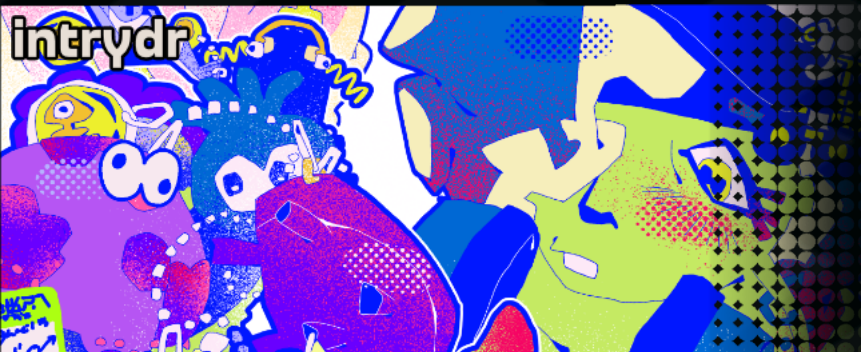
dartboard dock

TUMBLR: @redeyedsheepskull
A03: @redeyedsheepskull



Tired & Hebe

HEBE'S INSTAGRAM: @hebbe_chan
TIRED'S INSTAGRAM: @helloim_tired



this zine was our most ambitious one yet, but it came out so beautifully and i'm so thankful for all the people who said they loved the theme and the drawings and graphics we made as a mod team! i really hope the finished project will carry on to inspire others~

TWITTER: @intrydr

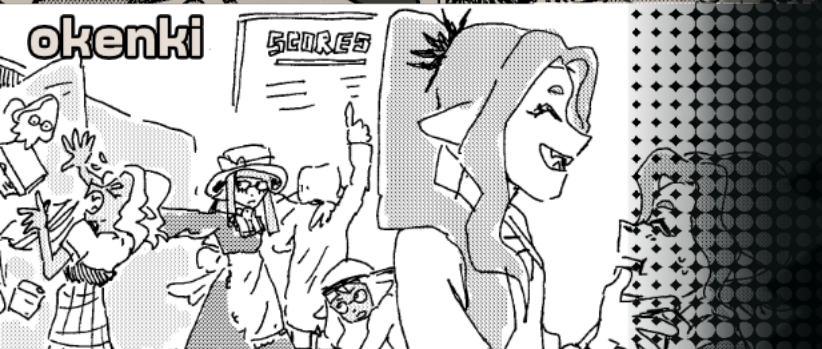
TUMBLR: @5577v



sometimes i lay in bed, looking at the stars, and i can't help but wonder... where the fuck did the ceiling go?

TWITTER: @spaceinvadeeer

TUMBLR: @spaceinvadeeer



TUMBLR: @okenki



All the work put into this is absolutely phenomenal!! I'm so honored to be part of it. It was fun to include all the little story details to my piece :P look out for them!

INSTAGRAM: @gentleroy

TUMBLR: @gentleroy



TWITTER: @finbottom1

INSTAGRAM: @peepyy93

Hope this zine gives y'all as much joy as we did making it

TWITTER: @bagels_donuts



The Inner Workings of Ink Theory

Giorg

I hope you enjoyed all of our hard work!

TWITTER: @Giorgio35969011

this was my first zine and second time doing 3d illustration!!! thank you mods for letting me get away with that, i had a lot of fun :0)

SITE: <https://oddiycommodity.neocities.org>

TUMBLR: @gummiewerm



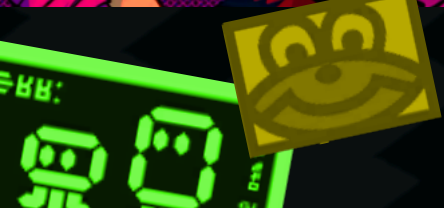
INSTAGRAM: @fishmans

TWITTER: @fishmans



INSTAGRAM: @_sodakind_

TWITTER: @_sodakind_





choulumi



Thank you for supporting our project, all the artists involved are so incredible and it means the world to us :)

TWITTER: @oatchichou

Hades



this was my first zine and second time doing 3d illustration!!! thank you mods for letting me get away with that, i had a lot of fun :0)

INSTAGRAM: @Hades.Brooke

TWITTER: @HadesBrooke

PXLPASTRY



i love splatoon and the spirit of creativity, joy, and community!!!! yay! :D

CARRD: pxlpastry.carrrd.co

calatarii

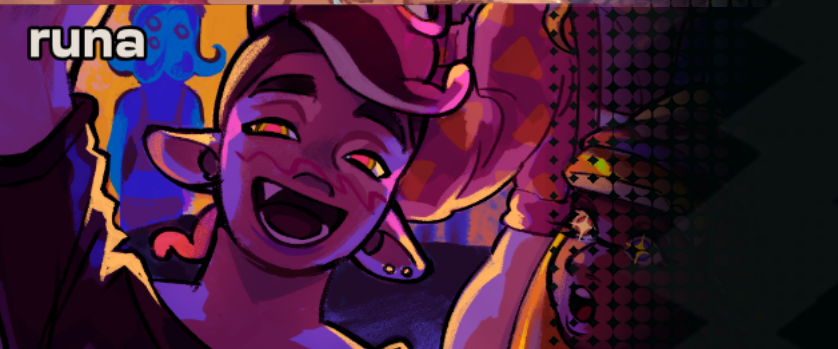


Decided to apply on a whim as a formatting mod and ended up meeting a lot of cool people aaa Thank you all so much for participating and reading!

SITE: <https://calatarii.carrrd.co/>

TOYHOUSE: @calatarii

runa



I hope you enjoy my piece. A OTH x Deep Cut concert seemed like a dream, but I'm so happy it actually happened by the time the zine is out! It was fun designing this experience for my characters and I would love to share some more concept art soon <3

TWITTER: @runa_la__

ARTFOL: @runa_la

one thing about splatoon that i've always loved is the music - it's such a key part of the world, with all the fun different music genres and groups... i wondered how the squids and kids in-world would appreciate the music, and a karaoke bar came to mind! once they're done with their idol work for the week, maybe the squid sisters like to sing in a more casual setting, with funky lighting and snacks to help them unwind! ♪

TWITTER: @starrysharks

TUMBLR: @starrysharks

Thank you so much for reading and supporting Ink Pop! You're officially one of the coolest Splatoon fans out there now! Stay fresh!

TWITTER: @yumeparadox

INSTAGRAM: @yumeparadox

Zeno



yumeparadox

Stay Fresh,
Never Frozen

光立



TWITTER: @sanaboyuri

Tjo



<3

TWITTER: @amfmrdo

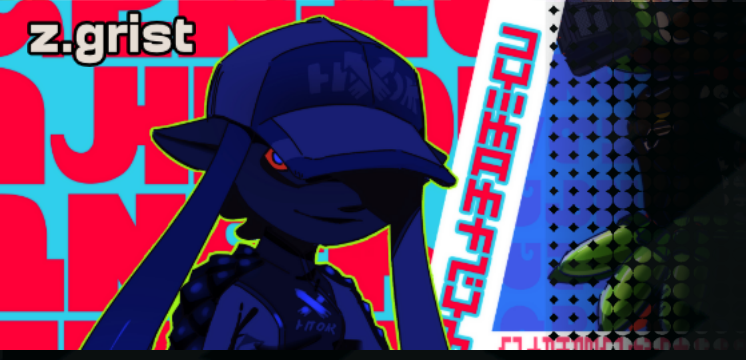
TUMBLR: @amfmrdo

AtmaUS



TWITTER: @atma_vs





Maybe the true meaning of Splatoon is the child soldiers we picked up on the way

TWITTER: @dim_sharp

Stay hip, stay fresh, and you'll be BLUEFIN APPROVED!

TUMBLR: @natikoko

I LOVE GIRLS

TUMBLR: @moonshineinkwell

A03: @moonshineinkwell

TWITTER: @DIROXIDE

INSTAGRAM: @diroxiide

what if squids were real

TWITTER: @z_grist

TUMBLR: @z-grist

:3

TWITTER: @BolteLeppa

INSTAGRAM: @leppabolte

It was a blast working on my piece! I hope you enjoy everyone's work <3

TWITTER: @KeysaTrii

TUMBLR: @keysatri

"You're telling me a ceph fried this rice?"
the rice in question:

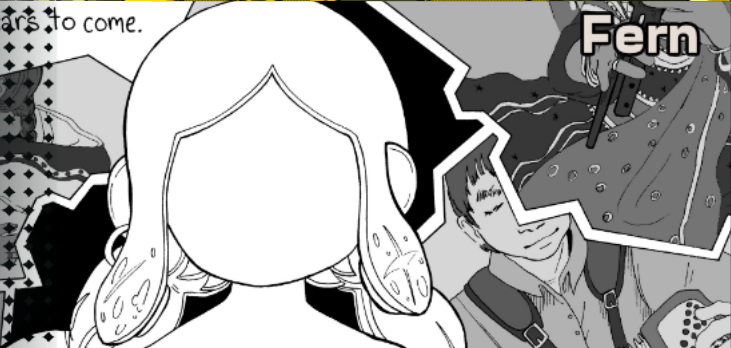
(Thank you so much for checking out this zine :D Could not have finished my work without the help and critique from my friends qwq shout out to them !!!)

TWITTER: @saltnyako

YOUTUBE: @saltneko

INSTAGRAM: @fernpellerin

TWITTER: @fernpellerinart





Merch artist credits



TWITTER: @pimupeachie
TUMBLR: @gummiewerm

It was a pleasure to work on this zine with this amazing team ! I hope you all enjoy it as much as we did while creating it ! Merci beaucoup ! <3

INSTAGRAM: @ghiibunni
TUMBLR: @ghiibunni

if you are reading this, you are truly slaying today!

TUMBLR: @ninjapaste
TWITTER: @ninjapaste

TWITTER: @plantbunii
INSTAGRAM: @plantbunii

TWITTER: @kake_ooooo
TIKTOK: @kake_oooo

i'm using tilt controls!

TWITTER: @uselesscable
INSTAGRAM: @useless.cable

remember to hold your salmonid like a fish in a man's dating profile <3

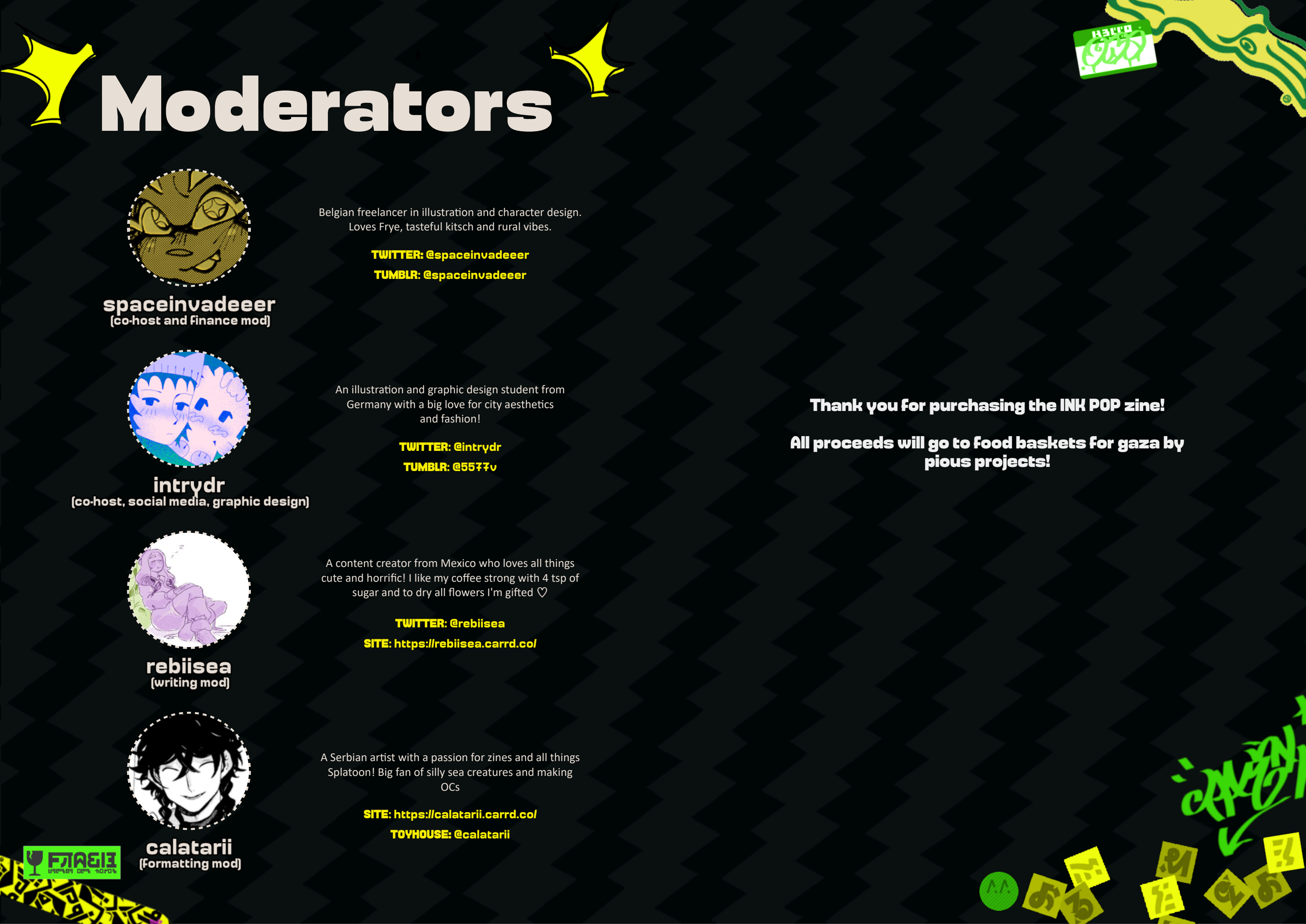
TUMBLR: @jackalopii
TWITTER: @jackalopiiii

Thank you so much for your support!! Don't get cooked...

TUMBLR: @mxikoart
TWITTER: @mx_iko

TWITTER: @cherrichus
TWITCH: @cherrichus





Moderators



spaceinvadeeer
(co-host and Finance mod)

Belgian freelancer in illustration and character design.
Loves Frye, tasteful kitsch and rural vibes.

TWITTER: @spaceinvadeeer

TUMBLR: @spaceinvadeeer



intrydr
(co-host, social media, graphic design)

An illustration and graphic design student from
Germany with a big love for city aesthetics
and fashion!

TWITTER: @intrydr

TUMBLR: @5577v



rebiisea
(writing mod)

A content creator from Mexico who loves all things
cute and horrific! I like my coffee strong with 4 tsp of
sugar and to dry all flowers I'm gifted ♡

TWITTER: @rebiisea

SITE: <https://rebiisea.carrd.co/>



calatarii
(formatting mod)

A Serbian artist with a passion for zines and all things
Splatoon! Big fan of silly sea creatures and making
OCs

SITE: <https://calatarii.carrd.co/>

TOYHOUSE: @calatarii

Thank you for purchasing the INK POP zine!

**All proceeds will go to food baskets for gaza by
pious projects!**



